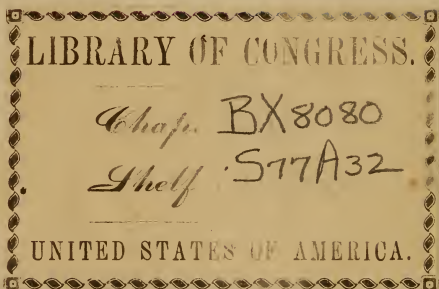


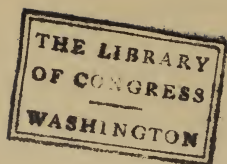
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Editor









THE  
CHIME OF THE BELLS

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

FREDERICK STRAUSS,

Author of Helon's Pilgrimage, &c.

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BY HERMANN BOKUM,

Instructor in Harvard University.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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"It appears to me," says Frederick Strauss in his preface, "that a similarity may be traced between the recollections of the life of a clergyman<sup>11</sup> and the chiming of bells; it is for this reason, that I have made use of this metaphor.

In general, it may be said, that recollections are most easily retained, when connected with sounds; the recollection of any object, then, which refers to churches is likely to be awakened in the mind by the sounds of those churches, i. e. by the tones of their bells.

Indeed the life of a clergyman is but the sounding of a bell, — a call upon the congregation to assemble in the presence of the Son of God, who speaks the words of eternal life.

The sounds of bells invite to festivals. In this way these narratives unpretending and unassuming are only designed to invite to Him who can make the whole life one festival."

And in another place of the preface he remarks: "They are recollections of *youth*, they were written in that period of life and are in harmony with its feelings; and of the youth of a *clergyman*, because I wished to contribute my share to exalt a vocation which deserves to be exalted."

The translator has to acknowledge his obligation to a friend for the version of the poetical passages occurring in this volume, which contains but the third part of the original work. A few local references and some reflections, suggested by unimportant

circumstances, peculiar to the Germans, he has omitted. The last chapter, entitled "The Celebration of Spring," appeared originally in the Religious Souvenir, then edited by the Rev. Dr. Bedell. Frederick Strauss is at present court preacher and Professor of Theology in the Berlin University. But although he is now called to a far more extensive sphere of action, and the one to which these recollections refer, he will not be displeased, it is hoped, with this tribute which the translator wishes to pay to the success of his early labors. If he may judge from his own experience, the hearts of many, who peruse these pages, will be impressed with the beautiful and elevating influence of the "poetry of religion," presented in this volume.

H. BOKUM.

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## DOMESTIC DEVOTION.

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"Bring hither the pleasant harp, with the psaltery," said the venerable father to his daughter-in-law, and rose in his arm-chair to receive the instrument of kings. All the children endeavored to anticipate his wish, but the daughter-in-law had first approached the harp, and removed the veil from it.

"Awake up my glory," resumed the father, "my heart is ready, so that we may sing and praise. For a long time, indeed, I have not heard the hands of the *domestic stranger* touch the cords to accompany our song and praise."

It was the first evening of a visit which we had made to the paternal house. When children are once presiding over a household of their own, they have then become in regard to their parents, what the father just called them, domestic strangers, — strangers since their roots are now fixed in another soil, and yet domestic, since these roots have branched out under ground, as it were, and are connected with the trunk by an invisible tie. But whether the paternal house yet actually exists or not, we sometimes feel a peculiar longing to be filled anew — so to speak, with the spirit of our home, and

to return to the source from which our life has sprung forth. This longing is the cause of that secret feeling of home-sickness, which is always experienced by children who are united to their parents by the proper relations. We also had felt this home-sickness. On a wintry day we had come through snow and through frost to visit the dear paternal home. I will say nothing now of the feelings with which I approached my home, of the sweet recollections, which the sight of so many favorite scenes of my childhood, awakened within me, of the consciousness of that entire chain by which the various stages of life are connected, a consciousness which always accompanies our return to the home of our childhood, nor of the joy that I could communicate all this to a beloved wife. Nor even of the moment when we entered and beheld the dear countenances of father and mother ; a meeting which is often felt as an emblem of the blessed meeting above, which will no more be followed by a separation. To all this I shall at present merely advert cursorily, that I may hasten on to a subject, by which my soul was not less moved. It was the hour of domestic devotion to which we have just heard the father invite us.

For a long time I had joyfully anticipated this hour of devotion. Not only because in concluding such a day, it consecrates all the emotions of the heart and of the life ; but also because I could not present to my mind the whole family circle in my paternal house in a purer and more perfect manner, than in the picture of our domestic devotion. In this house every thing appeared in that antiquated style which is so pleasing a



sight in the house of a minister. Strikingly ancient was the situation of the father himself, in whose person the offices of a teacher, judge and chief, were still found united. What the aged minister is in a more extended sphere to his congregation, that he is in his own house in a more narrow circle, and the office which Sundays he holds publicly before the congregation, the same office he discharges in the morning and evening at the altar of domestic devotion with as edifying an influence. Domestic devotion forms the medium between the worship of the heart exclusively, and public worship. If the hour of domestic devotion is not observed in the life of a minister, the worship of the heart wants that solemnity, which public worship alone can confer, whilst the latter is void of that intensity of feeling which originates in the worship of the heart. As long as the proper connecting link is wanting between external and internal worship, each of the two is violated, and cannot produce those effects, which it would produce, if properly connected with the whole to which it belongs.

Hence it happens, that divines as well as laymen at the present day, do neither derive from public worship the intensity of feeling, nor from the unseen life of the heart before God, the daily refreshing influences which our forefathers enjoyed so richly during the hours of domestic devotion.

A principal link of the chain being wanting, all its other parts are necessarily disjoined, and the manifold attempts at improvement are entirely wanting in success, or procure but a momentary relief. It is likewise by

allotting the proper time to domestic devotion, that in regard to domestic life we become aware of the point of transition, when divine and human interests meet each other. He who has had the good fortune to have been educated in a house, in which the most beautiful and elevating customs of a by-gone time have been preserved, will be ready to admit, that there is no mirror in which the father's house and his early childhood is more purely and distinctly reflected than in these hours of domestic devotion. Never shall I forget the edifying influence which I felt at the time which preceded my entering the High School, or the time of my confirmation, or even during those hours of an earlier period when I was yet unable to understand fully all the minute parts of the domestic service, but was capable of receiving a highly beneficial though somewhat general impression from the hours of prayer and praise. I felt, therefore, as if I had heard the festival sound of the bell, when the aged and venerable father rose from his arm chair and called for the pleasant harp and the psalter.

The domestics entered, and the father seated himself in his usual place at the upper end of the long family table. The large family Bible was lying before him, in which single passages were underlined on every page; they had become worthy of particular notice in the course of the many years and the many times, that the Bible had been read through. On the one side the mother was seated, on the other the harper, then the children, the domestics, and the grandchildren, without any further marks of distinction.



“Awake with psaltery and harp,” said the father once more. “When I hear your playing my dearest daughter, I am reminded of David, the Son of Jesse Oh ! that his child-like, pious mind, might be spread among us to-day.” He says: “I myself will awake early.” We will reverse the case, as it behooves the inhabitants of an occidental country, to whose devotional exercises the evening bears the same relation, which the morning bore to the oriental nations : let us be up late to sing and to praise.

The old man uncovered his head. This was the sign that the devotional exercises were to commence. Some preparatory touches of the cords were heard, we then sung,

The sun has gone to rest,  
The twilight shades appear,  
The closing day, so blest,  
Admonishes to prayer ;  
Come with the voice of praise,  
Come to the gate of heaven,  
A broken, contrite spirit raise,  
And hope to be forgiven.

The tones of the harp softly re-echoed the hymn for some moments. The father opened the large family Bible, which had been handed down to us from several generations, and said : —

“Since we are at present occupied with hearing from the lips of St. John, the beloved apostle, the relation of the life of our Lord, after his sublime and profound introduction, we came to the description of his baptism and afterwards to the simple, but impressive manner in which our Lord called his first disciples. To-day we shall speak of the history of the marriage at Cana,

This is a scene of domestic life, which we sometimes, — though seldom — meet with in Holy Writ. Since this book contains a true and exact history of the human race; it is natural, that it should be more occupied with subjects which admit of an extensive application. In how very important a light, however, domestic life is regarded in the word of God, we may judge from the fact, that on its first pages the marriage state is praised as an institution of the Lord. It is likewise somewhat remarkable, that our Savior begins every conspicuous section of his life, with a domestic joy which he either confers or receives.

With the last annunciation of his advent we are acquainted by the narrative; from which we likewise learn, that a blessing is conferred on the aged priest, Zacharias, and his wife Elizabeth. At the commencement of the three years of his teachings we find him attending a marriage at Cana. Shortly before the time of his sufferings he gave back a brother, whom he called from the dead, to his sisters; when on the point of death he gave to Mary a son in his place. His ascension occurred at Bethany, where, during his last years, he had enjoyed most of the still happiness of domestic life. Regarding the occurrences at Cana in this connection, it will undoubtedly become to us more interesting. Let us contemplate it then, with all its minute features and domestic characteristics, which can never be done in the same manner before the whole congregation. It is on that account so perfectly suited for the hour of family worship.

The father then read, how Jesus and his disciples

were also invited to the marriage. He comes to joy and suffering, said he, and wherever he comes he brings peace and consolation. O, the Lord is little known from experience among men, else instead of the numberless wishes, which fill the hearts of men, this only would be known, that he might be always felt to be near us.

“But let me also tell you, how I picture to myself his entrance into the house of marriage.” He then described how Jesus came with the salutation of peace, how he addressed the bridal couple, how he joined their hands, blessing them with the blessing of Abraham. They then probably fell down on their knees, but he raised them up and reclining with them at the table, he entertained the company with pious conversation. “Believe me,” said the father, Jesus looked around in the circle which he thus enters as a friend, there he also remains for a time as a welcome guest, and finally chooses the favored spot as his constant habitation. Your mother and I have experienced this, my children, and we speak of what we have seen and heard.

Afterwards when he came to the passage: “Woman, what have I to do with thee,” he spoke seriously and strongly against the profanations of the history of the Lord, by all those who thought to discover in these words, marks of ill-humor and a blame preferred against his mother. If these words were actually, in the original language as rude as they are in the translation — which is not the case, — I am yet certain, that they would have been pronounced by the man of love in such a tone of voice that the mother

would have thought she heard an expression of child-like submission.

How sweet was afterwards the transition from these serious remarks to the expression of mildness and acknowledged superiority, when he read the passage, "Whatever he says to you, that do." He turned to his grand-children and told them, that this was still the best and truest maternal direction, flowing from a heart filled with love, but humbly submissive to the highest love. Nor did he forget to address the domestics; for he now described the activity of the servants, the filling of the water-pots, and their ready attendance. The Lord, indeed, said he, confers favors during your sleep, but not by sleep alone. — He requires industry and faithfulness, of us all, and you are conscious yourselves, that you are never more joyful, than when you walk in the path of the Lord, and faithfully do your duty. "Yes indeed," said they all, with an expression of respect and confidence, such as is seldom found among domestics. "How did you succeed to-day in the forest," said the father addressing himself to the female servants. They humbly stepped forth, and related openly, how their carelessness had been the cause of some damage, which they had sustained. "It is well, that you confess it," said the father mildly, "I forgive you willingly: you will, however, I hope, ask likewise the forgiveness of the Lord, that you may succeed in guarding yourselves against similar faults."

The servants looked as if they could never again neglect their duty. The whole domestic history of the day was thus recapitulated at the time of domestic de-



votion in the most elevating and beautiful manner, and before the earthly close of their daily labors they had settled their accounts before the throne of the Lord.

The miracle by which water was changed into wine became now the subject of conversation. "Water into wine," exclaimed the old man with emotion; "who is there, that cannot experience every day the same miracle: I found to-day my walk to a sick man very fatiguing, and when I had arrived at length at the far distant farm I was exceedingly tired; but when I saw how the sick man had received the counsels of the Gospel, when I found him so submissive and patient, rejoicing in the grace of the Lord, and looking with joyful anticipations into the future, then my heart was filled with gratitude, my fatigue disappeared, and I returned with the feelings of a youth. There also had water been changed into wine. Yesterday we lamented that in our far advanced age we could not have you, my dear children, near us, and to-day — I see you all assembled around the paternal table even as in former times."

"Alas! not all, husband," said the mother, "our Sophia we shall not see again,"

"Be patient, wife," replied he: "water changed into wine! — we who are far advanced in age, shall probably be the first to meet her. The seed of tears springs up into a harvest of joys. — That meeting will prove to be a heavenly wine formed out of earthly waters, and until that time, these — pointing towards the grandchildren — we may consider as the pledges, the earthly wine. Ask your own heart, grandmother,

whether the departed child has not been doubly replaced to you in these grandchildren, and whether you do not feel at every moment of joy, which you derive from their sight, that you shall see your Sophia again."

We had now touched a subject, which, in a family circle is not easily relinquished. Many a trace of the pious course of the departed was again exhibited, her last hours were described, and we were readily reminded of the frequent instances, when her presence had been full of blessing to us. The domestics likewise spoke with emotion of the kind lady, who had admonished them so often with love and meekness, and of the joyful days they had spent, as often as she afterwards came to visit us. We all felt deeply moved, but the father said, "wine out of water! she is now better provided for, and she deserved more than we to be the first to taste the wine of eternal life." At that moment the moon threw her beams into the room. "Mother, mother!" exclaimed the smallest grandchild, and stretched its little arms up to the moon. As he had often been told, that his mother was in heaven, sun moon and stars, and all that he saw above were to him the emblems of his departed mother. The whole company was moved. Weeping, the sister took the child into her arms and led it to the window. At length the father repeated again:—"Yes, yes, it is not less true, wine out of water."

He then described the astonishment of the Ruler of the feast, the statements of the servants, the grateful joy of the bride and bridegroom, the surprise of the guests, the increasing faith of the disciples, and the sim-

ple and sublime greatness of Jesus. "My children," exclaimed he, "his disciples believed in him after the miracle had been done ; it behooves us to believe in him, in expectation of the time when it will be done : water changed into wine, time into eternity. He who believes this, will seek for communion with Christ. By that communion suffering is changed into trial, mourning into sweet sadness, sweet sadness into consolation, consolation into joy, and joy into bliss. This is the particular characteristic of Christianity. It elevates every thing. It draws us upwards, towards heaven, and by this tendency all that is earthly receives a noble stamp. As an hour of domestic devotion like the present produces likewise a part of the elevation, it raises us to a higher stage of the day we have completed.

The father closed the Bible after another psalm had been sung by the whole family. He made some inquiries concerning certain domestic arrangements, and in regard to matters which concerned the congregation. All this was done, in a spirit which clearly showed that it was considered as a part of the evening devotion. The character of the Divine was far from being profaned thereby ; it was the human affairs, which by this proceeding were elevated. He used often to say that by this course every earthly occupation was surrounded by a heavenly frame — so to speak, which was worth more than the picture itself.

After these individual considerations had been attended to, the most important part of our service was to follow, I mean our joining in prayer. The father knelt down first, then all those who were present.

A solemn prayer ought always to be pronounced in a kneeling posture, for it is an act of deep humiliation before God. In our churches it is omitted from external reasons, but it seems to me, that many a one would prefer even there to have this custom introduced. Whatever we do with the whole energy of our souls that we also like to shadow forth by external manifestations.

The prayer which was now pronounced, was short, but it flowed from the very heart. Every expression of gratitude or prayer, every humiliation or vow bore the marks of the peculiar and individual wants which had given rise to them. The general expressions had only reference to the congregation at large, which, of course, must be remembered in the family prayer of their pastor. Such a prayer is the crowning of domestic life, and when we see a whole family prostrated before the Lord, in such an intense devotion and holy state of feeling, we feel inclined to exclaim "Behold the tabernacle of the Lord among men."

The father rose. The others remained on their knees. He now pronounced the blessing over their inclined heads, and his words fell into their hearts.

Again the sounds of the harp were heard, and in conclusion were sung the beautiful lines :

On the spot where St. John was laid,  
We humbly seek our rest, &c. &c.

The clock struck ten. The domestics shook hands with us all, the father embraced us with the kiss of peace and said to me, "you observed, my son, that there is no change of custom in our house."



## MY AUTUMN-DAY.

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From the days of childhood, the autumn has ever affected me more than all the other seasons. It afforded scope to a certain disposition to sadness, which forms a conspicuous feature in my character; and I recollect, that, in my early youth, I have passed an entire day in this kind of joyful sadness, when something had occurred, which was impressed with the peculiarities of autumn. However, I never felt so clearly and distinctly that state of mind, which the autumn occasions, as on the day which I am about to describe. I believe that there are some, who are conscious that certain days in their lives, belong, in a peculiar way to each of the seasons; days on which they are affected in a strong and distinct manner by their exclusive properties. We ought to keep such a day full in our remembrance, for our minds return to it with every kindred recollection, and, in after time, always lead us back to that first and strongest impression. I have often experienced this in regard to my autumn-day,—for thus I wish to distinguish it, in speaking of a picture which lives immutably in my heart. I cherish it the more fondly, that as the life of a clergyman is so full

of sadness and yearnings for the long home, whenever emotions of this kind are awakened, I may not want a consolation in the time of sorrow, nor a hope in the season of sadness. On that day I experienced both in the most lively manner; but in the troubles of active life it is not always possible to enjoy them together. It was sometime after the harvest had been completed; the last corn-wagon crowned with garlands, and accompanied with songs in praise of autumn, had been brought in; a plentiful season of fruit had afforded some agreeable days to the children; early in the morning the bee-hives had been robbed of their abundance; nor did we forget to thank the Lord "for his faithfulness, which is great," and "for his compassion, which is new every morning." Already we had lived to see all this. The winter-season was rapidly advancing; and the vivid colors of nature lost more and more of their splendor, and every object partook of the sombre and faded appearance of autumn. Saturday eve appeared like the extremity of a long and sad day of exemption from labor. At no great distance the measured strokes of the threshers were heard to fall. A long file of matrons and girls passed the windows, with baskets on their heads, filled with the blessings of the late harvest. From time to time a wagon appeared with the belated produce of the fields. The last fruits had been gathered in. The dry wood from the forest was flaming high in the chimney, and already the cold was sensibly increased.

When I opened the window early on Sunday, the cold breeze of an autumnal morning rushed in, al-

though the sun was shining brightly. I looked upon the last flowers, which, as a precious gift, had been attended to with peculiar care, and were thus preserved much longer than the others. There had been a hoar-frost during the night, and now when the sun began to shine, the leaves showered down from the trees, and rustled into their graves. This often reminded me of the death-bed of the unhappy man, who, after a nipping night frost of poverty and despair, is no longer able to endure the sunshine of fortune, and when we indulge the hope that the cold heart may warm and beat again for a season in livelier pulses, it suddenly breaks, and the unfortunate sinks into the grave, like the leaves in the sunshine after the hoar-frost of the night.

This recollection excited all the feelings of my former sadness, and it seems to me as if, through the agency of nature, this pensiveness was to attain to-day its highest pitch; for the light of the sun immediately grew pale, a sombre veil extended gradually over the whole country, and soon a thick mist obscured everything. It had not dispersed, when we were going to church. I was compelled to lay by the discourse I had prepared; for it did not suit the state of mind in which I then was. The heart is never constrained with impunity, and the sermon must suffer for it, whenever the speaker refrains from indulging in the expression of any temporary, but strong feeling. The preacher should never do it. As I only intend to describe the several states of my mind, I will give here some parts

of the sermon, as I, perhaps, spoke them. The words, and turn of expression, were those produced at the moment of delivery ; but its tendency and the train of ideas, which I pursued, have not vanished from my memory.

1 Pet. 1 : 8. *The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever.* These words are words of home-longing. They speak of the transientness of the earthly, and of the permanence of the heavenly world. This yearning after our home is a feeling, which, founded upon, and comprehending both these considerations derives from them a holy longing after the things beyond this life. At no season of the year does this feeling affect us more nearly, than at the present. Autumn is to man peculiarly the time of a longing after home, after a home beyond the grave.

*We live with nature.* Faith does indeed bring to our view a more perfect state of being, a holy and better world, of which we are to become the citizens. Still we may not entirely tear ourselves from the earthly one. We live with nature. The natural man belongs to her entirely. The spiritual man, indeed, separates himself from her, when he retires in himself and suffers no longer the outward world to control the world within. Soon, however, when he feels perfectly at home in this interior world, he also returns willingly to nature, and becomes conscious that he lives with her, and that the Lord reveals himself in nature as well as in his heart. Then the surrounding world will be intimately connected with the spiritual man.

Every spring will fill his heart with hope ; every autumn with sadness. When this season approaches, when the evenings set in early, and the heavens are colored by the setting sun with ruddy tints, — when the mists rise over the fields, — when our meadows and fields are pale and brown, and the hues of hope fade away to those of transientness, when, after cold nights, the dry leaves rustle from the trees at the first glance of the sun ; then our hearts are filled with melancholy, the heavens are darkly covered, and but seldom can the weak rays of the sun penetrate through them, resembling the last looks of love of a departing friend. The birds of heaven haste away over mountain and valley, over sea and land, and leave our bare and wintry region. We lose much. The flowers disappear ; warmth decreases ; death is the word which resounds everywhere : and death is echoed back from the soul of man. A sad foreboding occupies our hearts ; we feel the existence of a secret desponding, and we also would depart ! we feel a longing for our home.

Whilst we live with nature, we open our heart to her language as to a faithful companion, but we answer her also. She influences us ; but we also exert an influence upon her. Her action and our re-action must be controlled by the peculiarities of her situation. As her agency is varying, so also is ours. We sow in the time of spring, and we plant in hope ; in the autumn we gather the harvest and store it up in granaries. Arrangements are made for a hard and severe season, the time of a rough and cold winter. As in the evening of life, in the neighborhood of death, every pru-



dent man arranges his affairs, calls in distant property, closes his business and bids farewell to his friends, and then awaits the parting hour in peace and resignation ; so we carry on our labors at the end of the year. It seems as if we were preparing for a speedy return to our homes. At this season the world is like a house, which has been visited by death ; joy is unsuitable to it ; we behold the dying man, wherever we turn, and are occupied only with committing the loved remains in honor to the grave. Thus, in the autumn, the whole creation is a great house of mourning, thousands of the departing expire before our eyes ; everything is filled with sadness, and all our labors are directed to the disposal of the products of the dying year. Then we feel the longing after home and the sorrow of parting. *The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away ; but the word of the Lord endureth forever.*

This, however, is but one side of the picture. The autumn is also a time of longing for our home, inasmuch as *we live in nature*. In our bodies we live in nature. Whatsoever influences her, exerts also an influence upon them ; they obey the same laws of vicissitude, they are subject to the same curse. We look back in the season of autumn upon a beautiful time that has past. A time full of light and life, a spring redolent of flowers, a summer full of fruit ; months of labor and joy have ended. Filled with melancholy, we bid farewell to all these things. What have the evenings brought to us ? What the morn ? What the many hours of the lengthened day ? Did we

not often stand with an overflowing heart before the beautiful world of our God? Did not everything around us and within us bloom and exult? This now has passed away. Every moment in life is the vortex of the time that has gone by; this we feel most strongly in the autumn. Then once more the delightful picture of a past time returns. O now, farewell, all ye beautiful days and hours, ye will never return; and yet ye were so fair! we now feel that we are not at home, that we are strangers and sojourners here; we are filled with a longing for our father-land.

*We live in nature*; and in her must endure many sufferings. Nature is bringing us now the season of winter, cold and death. How will everything be changed now? What sufferings will be inflicted on us? What cares will oppress us? What hopes will be destroyed? The autumn is a dangerous season. Who of us will sicken? What evils may the winter bring upon us? Autumn is the old age of nature. To us it must also come, after the will of God; the season must come when our strength shall be diminished, when beauty and youth shall fade, and when the heart shall be shut up from a thousand joys. Then death comes upon us. Autumn is the season of death. O God! what will be my sensations when that serious hour shall come? Will my heart be more pure and my conduct more holy? Will many of my beloved be standing around me, and bedew my cold hands with their tears for the last time? Will my works then follow after me; and shall I hear the call of a heavenly voice: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Enter thou into

the joys of thy Lord?" Will a dear friend plant a rose near my grave, and inscribe on my tomb: "Here a heart is decaying, which has often beat in boundless joy, which has often trembled in inexpressible pangs. But his joy was in God; and his greatest affliction was for his sins and weaknesses. This alone is left to me! traveller, consider!" And the funeral sermon; will it be only a prophetic amen, to the long prayer, which my whole life ought to have been? — yes, my friends, dying nature reminds us of our own death. Every falling leaf says to us: "Thus also one joy after another is falling from life." Each desolate meadow exclaims, "Behold! the earth is a great grave-yard, where soon thy bones will rest, mingled with those of thy beloved." Each glance of the sun says to us: "Thus eternal grace is willing to illuminate you; your tears are numbered; the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps." The whole of the autumn says to us: "Thou livest in nature, thou sufferest and diest with her." *The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth forever.* And now our looks are elevated, our home becomes of a heavenly description; *we live above nature.* The transientness of earthly things reminds us of that moment which must close our own course here. Whenever an autumn in nature has passed away, a new series of seasons commences, another autumn arrives and passes away in its turn. But when *our* autumn has ended; when death has once appeared to *us*, nothing returns. The series is finished; we



go to an eternal home, and behold the God, in whom we believe, face to face.

O ! how insupportable would it be, to go over the same path again, from the errors of childhood to the follies of youth ; and from the troubles of manhood to the weakness of old age ! In this consists our yearning for home, that we long for the end of all that is transient, wishing to return from abroad, and to have done with the changes of time.

Yet the succession in natural events reminds us of that world which lasts forever, our true father-land. We have here no fixed place ; we look forward to the future. We cannot apply a more beautiful name to the eternal world, than that of our father-land. Our departure from this world, is but the first step into the reality of being. Here we are in a desert and foreign country ; seldom it is, that we meet with love : we are often treated with rigor, it seems to be forgotten from whence we came. Above, *there* is our native country. There is the home we have left, and of the traces of which we cannot entirely divest ourselves. There is the undying and paternal heart, with its boundless compassion and immeasurable love, after which we long. There are our dead. They have been ours, and once more will welcome us. There is our father land, and there art thou, Jesus, thou Helper and Savior, our Brother and King ; thou whose cross is our star, whose death is our life, and whose love is our salvation. The Christian's longing after home is a longing after heaven — a desire after God. This longing after home, even when intense, is our greatest joy, in its urging

restlessness is our most precious peace ; in a transient world, an eternal hope of God. This is the purest and highest meaning of the holy declaration : *The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away, but the word of the Lord endureth forever.*

This sermon had been an effusion of the heart of the speaker. Thoughts, images and feelings pressed too powerfully, and I see that I have failed in giving them in their proper order. But it was not without the first blessing, I mean that which it conferred upon the heart of the speaker. When I left the church, I felt impressed with the home-sick feeling, of which we become often sensible, when we are conscious that the secrets of our spiritual nature have been revealed to us with uncommon clearness. O that my parents, sisters and friends were present to celebrate this hour with me ! This was my ardent wish. It often seems to me as if the words which come deepest from my heart could only be spoken for them. Before them, I made my first and timid attempts. At that time the substance did not escape their notice, although the form of expression was extremely imperfect. For this reason everything that is now more distinctly expressed, seems to return to them, as if it were their property. Happy are they whose later experience is witnessed and shared by those individuals, who welcomed the signs of the new life, when they first showed themselves. But there are few who can boast of this favor. The greater number of us mingle a tear of sorrow with the tears of joy, which flow from our eyes in the hour of our most perfect bliss. Although our lips may be si-

lent, our hearts exclaim: "Alas! that ye are no longer alive, ye kind parents, ye affectionate friends of our youth; — ye are so far away, ye dear old friends, and are unable to witness the fruits, whose germ and the blossoms ye nourished and protected with such faithful care.

These thoughts were but the continuation of those, which had been expressed in the sermon. But to-day these ideas were not to form merely a speculative enjoyment, but were to be exemplified in life. Often, it appears to me, our words express forebodings and prophecies of coming events, and this may serve as an evidence, that there is a great but concealed law, which, being laid down by a higher hand, connects word and event, spirit and body, the internal and external world in the harmony of a well constructed universe.

In the afternoon I was called to the sick-bed of old Andrew; he in whom even the spring could produce no other state of mind, than that of a longing for his home. When I entered his lowly cottage, I found him lying on a clean couch, in a calm of heavenly contemplation. Some old friends were sitting near him, together with the blind man, who had been the companion of his youth. "My dear sir," exclaimed he, when he heard my salutation, "everything is rapidly declining. Autumn is here, and we old men fall fast." "How do you feel, good Andrew," I asked. "Once more I am quiet. — They were just singing: 'when my last hour has come,' and I was so filled with

joy, that I almost became impatient. But I shall yet die to-day. The longing for my home is increasing more and more. I know well in whom I trust." In speaking these words, he often paused. "And what have I in this world? Yonder sits the blind man, the only one, with whom I have been young and with whom I can speak of old times. All the rest are dead. Lord Jesus, in thee I live, Lord Jesus, in thee I die. In life and in death I am thine. God drew me to him very early; in the death of every friend I approached nearer to him. I often think I hear the call of the old men, who have gone before me into their heavenly dwelling." "But do you not also hear that I call upon you to remain?" said the blind man. "The young world does not understand us. However, depart from this world of misery. I also shall not stay much longer abroad." The old men shook hands, and a deep longing after home was expressed in the countenances of the dying man and his blind friend.

They wished me to pray with them. I did so, but with the feeling, that the prayers of youth cannot satisfy the hearts of SUCH old men. I then blessed the departing old man for the hour of his removal, and I felt that something above myself, even my vocation, was speaking and acting through me. "Well, we shall see each other again," said the dying man, when he pressed my hand in concluding; "in heaven we all are youths." I hardly could tear myself from this holy communion of aged men. Surely, whom the spring fills with a home-longing, the autumn will bring to his home.



I stepped out in order to bid farewell to departing summer. How sad and dark was everything around me ! The fog of evening seemed about to rise. Here and there autumnal fires were lit, and the children nestled about them warming themselves. A cold wind penetrated my whole frame. The color of the meadows was a pale brown, and the flowers were all gone. The gaiety and hopes of spring had vanished. I walked into the forest. My steps went rustling among the falling foliage, and floods of leaves poured down upon me. The woods, which I discerned in the distance, were covered with the variegated foliage, with which this season endeavors to brighten its sombre appearance. In the valley no hammer was heard, and in the walk, which, at other times, was so dark and shadowy, the clouds could be distinguished through wide openings. All around a grey mantle was extended over the heavens.

The sadness of my heart increased. Young children, whose little hands were stiffened with cold, passed me quickly on their way home, and in their hurry did not think of saluting me. I visited a thousand places, where I had enjoyed myself in spring and summer, and among them the lovely dale, which I had entered hand in hand with my sister at the time when everything in nature appears in its holiday-dress. Now how changed ! All the brightness had faded from those beautiful places, and I was hardly able to recognize them. They were the same, and yet different, and like some features in the countenance of a deceas-

ed friend, reminded me of the loveliness of the departed spirit. When I passed the rill which glides through the meadows, I observed that its waters, once so clear, carried along with them the fallen foliage.

A flock of cranes flew over the country. The boys left their fires, and, hastening to the bridge, they welcomed them, and then bade them farewell. Some men were standing, observing them. "Cranes! cranes!"\* resounded from all sides: "Receive my salutation too, ye happy wanderers above us; ye are passing to the south and hastening away to the beloved valley of my youth! How gladly would I go with you!" They flew over the mountains, and I looked after them in the redness of the evening sky as long as my eyes were able to distinguish them in the far south-west."

"O hasten! The winter, you leave behind, and the blooming and beautiful summer is always before you. You find it in the north and in the south; in our dark oak-forests, and in the cheerful olive-woods of Italy. O that spring and summer were always thus

\* It may not seem irrelevant to remark, that among the European birds of passage, the crane not only unites in a great degree all the interesting peculiarities, which distinguish these feathered travellers, but it is also connected in the mind of the Germans with the lofty realms of poetry; to corroborate this remark, it is only necessary to take the following from Schiller :

"Sich da, sich da, Thionotheus  
Die Kraniche des Ibcus."

It would be difficult to produce an analogous case among the feathered visitors of the American shores.

before me ! That I might find them in love and hope, and everywhere seek them both."

"As you slowly depart, many a sigh from a burthened heart accompanies you. Whenever we behold you, how many pleasant days have past by us. You are the last to leave us, the last companions of a spring which is long since over and gone. Farewell, thou beautiful spring, with all thy vanished hopes, and thou warm and bright summer with thy sunny days, and with thy short and starry nights. Farewell !

"How ! ye turn !" ye return once more ? ye will stay ? Ah no ! I mistook your flight. Ye return ; but only after a long winter. Do not deceive thyself, poor heart ; in autumn no spring returns to thee ; the past is past ; the dead is dead.

"Farther and farther your flight carries you away ! You will disappear ! When will you return ? When you soar away over the mountains, we look sorrowfully after you, and wish you back again at our homes. O how different will it be in spring, when your flocks appear again from behind the mountains, where you have now disappeared ; bringing with you days of beauty, as if borne on the wings of the messengers of spring. Then the welcoming eyes of the rejoicing shall brighten in meeting you. 'Cranes,' the children cry in a different tone, up to your heights, and 'welcome ! welcome !' exclaim all who see you.

"Where are you borne already, wanderers in the clouds ? You fly. But the thoughts of men also fly, and elevate themselves where ye cannot rise — to God !

*"The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away ; but the word of the Lord endureth forever."*

In such conversations with them and with myself, I stood and looked after them. When all had disappeared, I hastened home. The evening sky was illumined with a dusky light, I might almost call it the emblazoning of death. A peculiar feeling seizes us, when it appears, and we are moved and elevated at the same time. When I approached the church-yard, a funeral was coming along. No bell sounded. It was night. The coffin was carried slowly in advance, and the friends of the deceased with black veils and cloaks, followed after in long procession. This is the last of life. The triumphant spirit of him, who is attended by that dark train, is now perhaps freed from his home-longing, but he has bequeathed it to those who are walking there, and they feel it now the more bitter and heavy. As the train past me, I thought how often I should be compelled thus to walk, before I myself should finally thus be borne ; how often the longing after home would be bequeathed to me by those I had loved, before it should depart at length from my own triumphant soul. I have buried already many friends ; but perhaps yet more will sink into the grave before me. To complete this picture, I imagined that all my friends had died, and that I was left alone. The sad yearnings after our home, which fill our hearts, cannot vent themselves through the medium of language alone, they seem to require the aid of illustration and imag-



ery, for though these may wound the heart, they yet exert a beneficial influence upon our feelings; they make us more conscious of the happiness and love which we enjoy. The blind man complained, that old Andrew was the only one, with whom he could speak of his youth; soon he would be quite alone, and would not be able to hear the voice of his heart re-echoed by his old friend. A part of our own being dies, as it were, with a dying friend. As long as the companions of our youth exist, we are entire; as often as we see one of them, our youth seems to return again; each one furnishes single traits, out of which the picture is composed. Nowhere is it preserved for us in purer, fuller, and more blissful colors, than in the heart of a mother or in that model upon which we fashion ourselves, our father. But when none of these are left to us, when our parents, the dear and beloved, are no more; when the companions of our boyhood have departed, the friends among whom we first awakened to consciousness; when thou also, my Charles, with whom many a new world was unfolded to my mental sight, and thou Rudolphus, with whom I preserve all the gaiety of youth, when thou, my brother, with whom I first began to pronounce the word "we," in its exalted meaning; when ye all shall have departed, in whom my youth lives, how much more bitter will then be the longing for my home! But in some measure this will be the case before that time, when ye, my aged friends, depart from around me, ye with whom I cherish the respect for old age, as with the friends of my youth, the gaiety of youth.

Alas ! when all the aged men in my congregation are gone, and I find no longer a venerable head, which I have only known as such, when I only meet with those whom I have seen as the more youthful, volatile and worldly ; when I shall have pronounced the blessing on the last of my loved old men, and when of many a one but indistinct and imperfect recollections are preserved ; then my longing after home will be bitter indeed.

But then and now this longing shall not be an inactive and unhallowed feeling ; I may not return to my home, without availing myself of the advantages which this foreign land offers to me. I will be active, because it is day, and I will cherish faith, because the brightest light in this life is but another name for darkness. May God be with me, that I may every day increase my faith and that of my people. Perhaps the course of the seasons will often grant me yet an autumnal day like this ; but let each succeeding one raise my heart towards heaven, until the time, when these graves shall be opened, and my own among them, and when that which has been sown perishable, shall ascend on high imperishable ; my longing will then be satisfied, and my father-land will be open before me.

I looked around me and observed that the funeral train had dispersed, and the grave-digger was standing alone by the grave, and was filling it softly. At the same time he sang, as he was generally accustomed to do :

“ My time and hour is when God wills.”

This song, and the evening chime of the bells, roused me from my reverie. Accompanied by the hollow and slow tones of the great bell, I returned to the parsonage. The moon had now risen and shone with a clear light.

## CHRISTMAS NIGHT.

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It struck two o'clock after midnight. I looked out upon the glittering winter-scenery, when from the market-place I heard the lively bells of the fast approaching sleigh.

Christmas-eve — a Saturday of the higher order, I spent very agreeably in the company of men, who were advanced in years but meek as children. The reading of a spirited discourse in commemoration of Christmas-day had protracted our sitting, till after midnight, and we had separated with the belief that the genuine feelings of childhood can return at the season of Christmas. On my return, I sat down for some time, and reviewed the labors and the joys of the holiday which had just commenced. I thought of all the beloved with whom I once kept this evening; and, lost in the contemplation of the pure and glittering midnight scene, I waited for the arrival of my friend. The stars were beaming with the most beautiful light. The shining Bear had risen high in the heavens, and the earth, arrayed in white, was thus prepared for the celebration of Christmas. I turned my mind on the devotional duties which I should soon be called to per-

form, and what an impression I should receive, when by the unwonted light of torches, I should proclaim the birth of the Lord. Thus occupied, the moment of departing approached.

Soon the foaming horse was at the door. My friend called to me. I threw my cloak around me, saluted my friend with the blessings of the day, and was quickly seated at his side. The spirited animal hurried swiftly on with the light vehicle. "What a night this will be!" exclaimed my friend. "See, I answered, we are driving in the direction of that dear constellation,\* the shining emblem of friendship; of all the stars in the heavens I like them best; they now illumine this sacred night; and soon the sun will be hanging in their place." The frozen snow was creaking in our progress; the stars were met by a thousand sparkling reflections from the ice of the stream beside which we were driving, and we passed the solemn and sacred moments in a lively interchange of ideas.

"It was truly a paternal action in the fathers of our church to place this delightful festival in the dreary and short days of winter," he said. And a wise one too, I answered, to celebrate the birth of our Savior, immediately after the longest night, when the natural year is born, and to follow his life to the beautiful spring, in the blossoms of which he was to die."

"Ah, he exclaimed, the Savior knew only the periods of childhood and youth. This often inspires me with love for the present time of my life. At these

\* Castor and Pollux.



two stages of his existence, the divine joined to his human nature is manifested in the most beautiful manner. His mother and his friends were more advanced in years ; and Simeon, and perhaps the sages from the east were also aged men ; we meet with all the stages of life among those who surround him, but he was only a child and a youth." "Do not rejoice too much, I answered, and let no vain joy, which afterwards may become the cause of grief, excite you. Those hoary sages were led to the manger by the star of Bethlehem. We shall be reconciled to old age, by selecting solemnly those two lights in the east for our conductors. — Thus we continued, and the sacred character of the night, the mysterious nature of the nocturnal services, and the charming figurative language, which forms so striking a feature in the solemnities of these festivals, were discussed in various ways. We soon approached our place of destination. Already we distinguished the steeple of the village. The first solemn tones of the bell sounded nearer and nearer. In the houses the lamps were lighted, and in all the roads the torches illuminated the scenery, and by their reflection we saw crowds of countrymen, wandering like pilgrims to the nocturnal service.

From the parsonage the songs of the children met our ear. Do you hear ? "Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he hath perfected praise." This confirms what I said before. He was a child and a youth ; and these are most ardent in his praise, and I also believe he is nearest to them ! — I was about interrupting him, but we had now arrived in the yard, and quickly

alighted. Nobody had heard us. I left my friend with his horse, and having ascended the staircase, I slowly entered the room. Christmas was kept here in the right way. What a view did this pious company present ! The father was sitting in his chair, and led the vocal music with his bass-viol. The mother was standing among the children, who were placed in the pleasing succession of their years, before the highly adorned and richly provided table ; now looking upon the gifts, and now upon their dear parents, they united their voices in a sweet hymn. Even little Julius assisted as much as he could. Behind them all the servants stood at a respectful distance, and endeavored to take a part in the hymn with which they also were acquainted. I ought to have named the venerable grandmother first. With looks of reverence and respect which old age only can communicate, she was sitting before her own table, on which she had placed presents for them all, and she had become a child herself, but in the most sublime meaning of that expression. They sung,

“ Far in the east the heavens are clearing,  
And old times are growing young ! ” &c.

I was standing at the door — the father only had observed me. The beauty of holiness in the truly sacerdotal life of this family made so great an impression upon me, that I could hardly refrain from giving way to my emotions. — I grasped the hand of my friend, who just then had stepped into the room, and pressed it more and more firmly until the singing had ended. Then the father rose and said :

“My children — for such ye also are, who have grown up, — my children, to-day our Savior was born, and in him the greatest gift of our life was conferred upon us. Joy is best expressed by making presents. Heaven has been so bountiful towards us — we on earth should be also bountiful to each other. Ye are all welcome to-day. Here, children! — Here, my dear and venerable mother! — Here, my faithful people! — Here too, my loved and lovely wife! mother of my seven children, greatest happiness of my life.” He embraced his wife. The children left their gifts, and hung around the necks of father and mother, and the servants came forward and wished them the blessings of the season, and expressed their gratitude. The grandmother rose and continued silent. They all wept. We stood there, though our tears did not permit us to speak. These were sacred moments! — This spirit of the times of our fathers, these truly sacred relations were manifested in everything; in the furniture and in the dress, in the manner of expression; in the firm tie which connected the family, and, by including the servants, elevated them to the rank of children; and above all, in that unaffected simplicity of behavior which can be met with only in the house where seriousness and meekness emanate from a belief in Christ. In short, this festival, as a whole, (for in such a case it is injurious to enumerate particulars,) yielded me such pleasure, that I embraced my colleague and said: “O that I might become as happy as you are!”

Now the presents were singly examined and praised.

Do not expect me to describe the joy of the delighted Julius, the thoughtful happiness of the lovely Emilia, the prudent calculation of the elder Julia — the rejoicings, embraces and frolics of all the children. In the house of such parents ; on the bosom of such a mother, even in this world it is clear, that the kingdom of heaven belongs to them, to the *children*.

Now the wife of the pastor turned to the male and female servants. She expressed her satisfaction with their faithfulness and industry, and handed to each of them a garment most useful to them. One only, who was engaged to be married, and was about to leave the service, received a distaff and some advice from the prudent housewife. Weeping, the girl kissed her hands, and said that the departure from father and mother had not been so painful to her as leaving her dear mistress. My colleague selects from among the candidates for confirmation those boys and girls whose conduct is unexceptionable, and educates them for his service. They are treated like his children ; they feel the blessing of love, and they do not leave service until they are married. You almost always see them become the fathers and mothers of happy families, and even then they continue to be sincerely attached to their former master and mistress. Of this I was aware ; but if I had not known it, I might have inferred it from the tears which trickled down the eyes of the rugged servant, and from the grateful emotions of their girls.

At length we stept to the grandmother's table. She had not been engaged with us in the distribution of



presents, but had been occupied in arranging her own gifts. To the children she gave various trifles—to the servants many little presents. She now turned to her daughter-in-law and said: "Through my son I have found in you a daughter, which before, God had not granted me, and may God bless you for it! But in memory of the happy days of your union, receive a well-preserved chain, with which I was presented by your father-in-law as a last Christmas gift. The good old lady was willing to confer gifts of an ancient fashion only—the new and fashionable ones she little regarded: life was lying behind her. She possessed greater store of such tokens than any one was aware. But as she had been for ten years drawing from her stores, it was reasonable to infer that they were well filled. She had commenced with the horn-book, from which her son had first learned his letters. She now handed to him the favorite Bible of her late husband. Keep it sacredly, at length she added; do not take away any of the tokens, nor raise the foldings of the leaves; they were made by your deceased father, it is the last which I had of him—and as I feel that I shall probably be present at no other Christmas, take the best and dearest gift, I have in my power to confer, and read particularly the underlined passages. Soon I shall see him again, and will tell him of to-day. Then I myself shall but live in your remembrance." "Oh you will stay with us," they all sobbed, and surrounded the dear old mother, who was regarded as the blessing of the parsonage.

The chair of honor was prepared for her. The



children played around, and examined their gifts ; the servants had left the room, and we sat down to breakfast. The particulars of our conversation, and our happiness I will not describe. For the sake of grandmother who did not hear well, we were compelled to speak rather loud, and it made our joy more noisy than usual. In one word, we all had become children again.

Once I took my friend aside, and pointed towards the pious old lady. "O," he rejoined, "this presents a new proof. Is she not the most lovely child of us all? Indeed in that sense, I agree with you in all your former positions."

On a sudden, the little ones rushed in, and called us out. The torches were moving through the whole village ; all the inhabitants joyfully called upon each other, and the light of the stars shone mildly from above. But this was not all. From the balustrade of the steeple, a shining cross was raised, and a hymn sung in the lively melody of Luther ;

"From heaven I have now come down."

We listened, and with the rising melody, our hearts rose also, and our joy was heightened. Near the cradle of his children that great man had sung that hymn, and my friend was of opinion, that the circumstance was indicated by the character of the melody.

After a short time, a second ringing of the bells invited us to the "church of lights," as it is here called. For a long time, I had felt a desire to perform

a service of this kind, and I had asked my colleague to confer its duties upon me.

With a peculiar pleasure and intense longing I put on the gown and the bands, and almost all the inmates of the house accompanied me to the church. It was already filled ; a thousand torches reflected their light through the windows, and the solemn tones of the organ seemed to pour down the first consecration upon the joyful multitude. No child of the congregation had staid at home. The peculiar state of mind which so early a meeting produced, the golden light of the church, the quickening frost, the clear starry heaven ; the lovely, joyful, and yet noiseless salutations, the mothers covered with large cloaks, under which they carried their children, and the warm dress in which all the members were wrapped, and above all, the hollow, strong and powerful sounds of the bell, these were the external peculiarities, which greatly heightened our exalted state of feeling on this morning ; this was the drapery, I would say of my sermon, or rather the back-ground by which my sermon was relieved.

The chandeliers had been lighted. Garlands of evergreen had been hung in symbols around the candles on the altar, the delighted multitude looked joyfully from behind their torches, acquaintances bowed towards each other, and yet all was silent.

My colleague had not suffered himself to be robbed of the service near the altar. He stepped forward, and according to the ancient custom, which is yet kept up here, he sung, "Gloria in excelsis Deo !" Now the

music pealed, and accompanied by the organ, the "Hallelujah," floated over the multitude. Afterwards they continued ;

" A child of bliss  
Is born for all."

The church music accompanied me to the pulpit. I must confess I had never experienced so peculiar a feeling on any former occasion. "Light in night," this is indeed a fit emblem of him who was born of the virgin, and gave our blessed faith, and our dear and holy service. Suffer me to enjoy this meataphor. To many this may seem childish ; but if you call childish, what I consider to be child-like, then suffer me to be quite a child, and to enjoy myself as children do. I spoke of Christmas joys. All the solemn joy of former hours poured out in my sermon. I will mention here some passages. The words matter not. I looked upon the joyful children, and upon the child-like countrymen. I had enjoyed myself so highly on this night, that even the words have been endeared to me.

John 1 : 5. *The light shineth in darkness.* Thus the disciple of love announces the birth of his master, and can I announce it to you in better words ? The dark night reigns without, but your lights have illumined it as a beautiful emblem, that many centuries ago, the divine light shone into our darkness. Where light is, there is joy. We can exclaim with David, "This is the day, which the Lord has made." Let us celebrate it by uniting our rejoicings. "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord ;" it is the

Lord God, who enlightens us ! But for this joy, a pure heart is required. Men must become children again, if they wish to enjoy it truly. They must divest themselves of the mere worldly seriousness of their later years ; they must dismiss their cares, their cunning, their habits of indulgence in passion. In the moment when man feels intensely joyful, there is a childlike expression upon him, which does not fail to move. To childhood and youth, to innocence and ingenuousness alone, joy is granted by God. The night in which we celebrate the birth of the divine infant, exercises this singular power upon us, by assimilating us to children at least for a short time. Near the manger of our Savior, before the blessed mother, among the simple shepherds, accompanied by the hymns of the angels — what better name can we give them, than that of “glorified children ?” Who can on this night continue his common pursuits ? Who does not now wish for forgiveness and innocence and peace ? Who would not become a child among these happy childlike natures, and learn once more to rejoice ? But what is the cause of our joy ?

“My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.” These words of Mary, the blessed mother, alone can give us to-day a suitable text for our joy ; for her heart was certainly filled most intensely with that which occasions our joy. Yes our joy is but a distant echo of hers. When she had saluted her friend, and received her blessing, Mary filled with the first and blissful feeling of a mother, raised her voice and pronounced

the well known hymn.\* Its most beautiful passage is this. "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior." Whom she means by "God, my Savior," whether the Father, or the Son, we can only ask at this distance, and in our cold state of feeling. But pious happy love is not divided; in the Father she has the Son, and in the Son the Father. We will become like her, and neither inquire nor divide, but exult in our Christmas joy; for, "Our spirit hath rejoiced in God, our Savior!"

How beautiful are the joys of Christmas, if we reflect upon their cause! It is always a joyful event, when a new citizen is given to the world. The heart of the father and the mother swell with joy, and all the acquaintances and friends welcome him to a world of pleasure and pain. But among the millions, who were born before Jesus, and among the millions who came after him, the birth of no one has filled the heart of the mother with such peculiar anticipations, or has so attracted the participating feelings of strangers, or been so distinguished by the rejoicings of heaven itself. Yea, while the earth shall endure, while men shall be born, and live and die, no moment can occur of equal importance with that, in which Jesus was born. For thousands of years that moment was anticipated, and thousands have passed away, and his name is yet pronounced with love. He was the light which shone in darkness. *He dwelt among us and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Fa-*

\* 1 Sam. 2: 1.



*ther, full of grace and truth.* And how do we now find this glorious one? In what condition do we find to-day, this only and incomparable one? O, not yet bowed down by misfortune, oppressed with the hatred of men; not yet ignominiously beaten and nailed to a disgraceful cross; not yet in tears over Jerusalem, and in sadness over a people who would not receive him. What a beautiful occasion for our joy is the return of this eve. Yea, "*my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior!*"

I was silent; the children of the choir continued:

See the holy mother there;  
Lo! in her lap the infant wakes  
Like a rose of Sharon fair,  
Like the light when morning breaks.  
View the shepherds, standing round,  
Full of deep and holy love,  
Bow them forward to the ground,  
And praise the Lord who reigns above;  
And she, the blessed virgin, now  
Clasps to her heart the smiling boy,  
And bending o'er his lovely brow,  
Feels all a mother's sacred joy.

And yet our joy in Christmas is so noiseless in its expression. True joy is always silent. It dwells and reigns within, in the most secret recesses of our hearts. He who feels intense joy, is silent. When the child was born, the joy which this event occasioned, was great in the heart of two persons; yet in its purity it lived only in the heart of the blessed mother. The shepherds were afraid; the heart of the mother only rejoiced, and the maternal heart always rejoices in silence. But the joy in heaven was loud, and that which the earth would not receive, the heavenly an-

gels celebrated in their hymns ! And is it not even now the same with the joys of Christmas ? The little children only, whose angels always behold the face of their father in heaven ; the little ones alone whom, on account of their innocence, we often call human angels, they rejoice aloud, and their rejoicings resound in the heavens. It seems as if to angels only it were given to express their joy with a loud voice. With us this joy is silent. It reminds us that the time of innocence is gone ; that in many respects, we have been fettered and contaminated by the world ; that our worldly prudence has removed us far from child-like simplicity ; that by our cares, we have been deprived of our child-like faith, and by our self-inflicted suffering from our child-like joy. This makes us sad, and sadness forbids our indulging in loud rejoicings. Then we ponder how that which has been lost, may be regained ; how that which has been misspent may be recovered, and pensive joy is silent. *Thus our spirit hath rejoiced in God, our Savior !*

The children sung :

Heavenly calm,  
Beautiful gift, refreshing balm !  
The child, which golden rays enwrap,  
Lies in the virgin's sacred lap,  
And there the crib in darkest night,  
Reflects the everlasting light !

Let us now consider the meaning of our joy at Christmas. If there should be one, who neither looks for sympathy in the joys, nor even in the sufferings of this life, nor in the never satisfied longing of his own heart ; to him we should speak in vain of the profound

meaning of our joys at Christmas. Joy consoles, so also does childhood. When in our hours of gloom, a joyful countenance meets us, or our looks are directed to the tender children, to their beautiful and innocent activity ; our disturbed mind is immediately lulled, calmed and consoled. But this is not exactly what I mean. To whom does this birth-day festival refer ? Who is born again to us in every Christmas night ? O it is he, who once a shining star, led the way from the east ; it is he too, who now, every day, as the meridian sun of righteousness, leads us from the west, and from every region — it is he, to whose faithful bosom, full of wounds, every bleeding heart may fly with confidence. He whose mercy grants all that is needful for us, to whose glorified image we look in every hour of weakness and of joy, and whose heart melts in love, whether we come or not, as your beautiful old hymn has it. Truly he who reflects, must believe it to be the voice of his own heart, when our fathers sang ;

“ Had not the child been born for us  
We all should have been lost ! ”

Salvation is for all ! “ *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior !* ”

The children struck in, with the incomparable words of Luther :

All this the Lord has done to show  
How his great love may ease our woe ;  
Let Christendom rejoice and raise  
One voice in his eternal praise.  
Hallelujah !

When I think of the influence of the Christmas joys, I find it difficult to be brief, whenever I wish to

show how fruitful this influence is. You know well how every true joy improves. That is not true joy, in which, and after which, we do not feel ourselves improved. At present I can say but little, but may it prove eternally true. A pure joy in this night must strengthen us in everything that is good for the whole year. And yet this is but of trifling importance when compared with that higher feeling, which makes us rejoice in the time of Christmas. Has not the salvation of the whole world emanated from the first celebration of Christmas? Was not this celebration, the source from which an abundant happiness has poured over an innumerable multitude? Thus in the mind of every individual, the first intense Christmas joy, and the first happy consciousness that his Redeemer has been born, becomes the foundation of a happy life full of peace and joy; the aurora of a new day full of light, the blessed beginning of a life, which, even in this world, is a walking in heaven. The first true joy cannot be called otherwise, than the joy of reconciliation; and this joy is the beginning, the foundation and the strength of an improved state, and is felt as the first germ of salvation. Happy the man, whom a Christmas joy leads to this salvation: whose spirit has thus rejoiced in God his Savior.

'The choir of children then sang :

The Savior will redeem us all,  
Earth-born indeed, but full of might,  
In many a heart resounds his call  
And many a heart reflects his light.  
In him we see the heav'ns unfold,  
View the first time our father-land,

Our faith and hope we now behold,  
Rich blessings from a father's hand.

On the other side, we may judge how little all worldly pleasures seem in comparison with that joy which a human heart can and does feel, from this circumstance, that for every joy we need hope in order to enjoy it. To be able to hope is the most beautiful and purest joy. Let us finally consider our joys at Christmas-time in another view ; and we shall find them bright with hope and rich in promise. For many centuries, Christmas has now been celebrated ; at first but by a few ; and gradually by more and more. It has extended farther and farther. Such are the laws of God's dispensations. Spiritual truth, like the natural light, rises gradually higher and shines brighter, and it will continue to do so, till all hearts are pervaded by its influence and consecrated to its service. The kingdom of God now exists and will increase continually. This is the hope with which we contemplate the futurity of the human race. The festival of Christmas celebrates the covenant, in which the beautiful in human nature, and the exalted character of the divine essence were united. As in the heavenly child the elevated character of the divinity, added to all that was most lovely on earth, formed a wonderful harmony ; in like manner it shall be with us in our future life. This is the destination to which our best hopes should be directed. If we have once been enabled truly to enjoy the time of Christmas, that covenant has been applied to our hearts and to our lives, and the path to improvement has been opened to us. But on the earth the covenant



shall not be completed. However elevated and spiritual our joy at Christmas may be, we are waiting for a better one, for an eternal Christmas, in a new heaven and on a new earth, where it is true, our hymn of to-day may be repeated, but in how different a manner ; "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men."

There we shall find again the blessed mother, and with her in continued delight and happiness we shall rejoice and say ; "*My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. Amen.*"

There was a peculiar and serene state of mind in the congregation, as is natural, when such a festival is celebrating. They sang ;

This is the night in which appeared  
The loving Spirit of my God !

After the prayer and blessing, the music sounded again in its most joyful tones. The multitude continued together until the end ; and when they poured forth through the doors, they all joined in rejoicings. The torches had not yet burnt down, and the whole village was illumined. In the church, night was almost reinstated, but the chandelier on the choir was yet burning, and the morning light shone through the windows. In the anticipation of a beautiful Christmas, where we all shall be yet more like unto children, we passed through the church, now empty and silent, except as the sound of distant joy was faintly heard. We left it with the solemn feelings, with which we generally go through church, which a short time before, has been crowded, and which again on a sudden,

has become empty and still ; in which the echo of a single step is heard, and the last tones of prayer and praise are gradually lost, as it were, in the vaults.

The horse and sleigh were standing at the entrance of the church-yard. We took our seats and returned happy to our home. Here and there on the way we yet observed the train of countrymen with torches, whose light contrasted with the dawn. The radiating cross shone with a fainter light from the steeple. The stars had grown pale. The star of love, the precursor of day, and, as it were, the messenger of the sun, alone met our eyes, when we turned round. As we approached our home, we observed, that already, preparations were making for the Christmas market, which was about to be opened. Here also we were received by the festive sound of the bells, and although I had no children at home, for whom I might have prepared a happy Christmas, yet I had a child-like congregation, to whom I was to preach at day-break. The night had strengthened me materially for this task.

As soon as I descended, my friend called to me. Without children, this night would not have been so blessed to us, and if we were not young men, we should not have had courage for this tour. I keep to my assertion ; Jesus was but a child and a youth, and —

“ Yes, I replied, in that sense — ”

But the horse stopt, and the door of my own parsonage opened.

## THE NEW YEAR.

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In every year I have two long festivals. They exert an agreeable influence upon the whole year, if I am permitted to pass them undisturbed in my own way. In spring, we have the confirmation of the children, and in winter, the ten days from St. Thomas' day to new year. These last days in particular, form but one chain of festivals. They commence with the shortest day ; then follow Christmas-eve, the two great holidays, then a Sunday generally intervenes, and finally, new year's eve and new year's day. During these days, I am only engaged in religious rites ; all serious occupation with human sciences must now be disregarded ; and to write sermons, and deliver them ; to admonish and be admonished ; is the peculiar occupation of the time. It often happens, that almost every day, I must speak publicly during this season ; the church is filled, and my heart likewise.

In this manner, I had passed this delightful decade this year also, and I had experienced much that was agreeable and refreshing. There is always a degree of sadness felt in the last days of a long series of festivals. An emotion, which I am often unable to express, fills my soul on the last evening of the old

year, and on new year's day. When I recal the many pleasures, which I have enjoyed — all are past ; and when I look into futurity — man can only examine it with an inquiring eye.

Seldom however, have I been moved so deeply as I was on new year's night. With tears in my eyes I had written my sermon. It was a scene like the last radiance of the setting sun, which shone so dusky and dismal into the room. From thence I was called into a house of mourning, where the father, a pious and good man, had been suddenly called away by an apoplectic fit. The close of the year, had also been that of his life ; with the dying year, he also had expired. This occurrence had affected me deeply, and that which I afterwards considered it my duty to say to the widow and the children, only tended to increase my sadness. These feelings were heightened when I turned over the leaves of my diary, and looked over my sermons, when I wandered with the spirits of my friends, and imagined myself far away in the house of my father ; — with such feelings I entered my garden in the last hour of the year. The snow crinkled under my steps, and it seemed that with a serious and solemn light the stars shone upon me. The moon was hidden by a cloud. I had scarcely arrived in my garden, when the hymn of my blind and unhappy neighbor arose from his dark cottage — he sung with a loud and joyful voice, as if he was rejoiced that another year had been taken away from the heavy burthen of his time, — and when I approached in order to listen, he sung the old hymn ;

Praised be the Lord ! The year is past !  
 And I can raise my feeble cry,  
 And sing, whilst yet my life may last,  
 Great is the Lord who reigns on high !

I continued to listen to the close of the hymn ; for, executed by such a singer, it exactly suited my state of mind. But when he commenced the verse,

And if this year should bring along  
 With it my dying hour, —

he appeared so elevated and full of longing, so urgent, and so full of confidence, that my heart also was elevated, I thought, “ what an unspeakable blessing from God is the hope of an eternal life, when we are oppressed with the sufferings of the world. He paused. The blind man had probably been weeping, for soon afterwards followed, in a suppressed, broken and soothing tone :

I will not, must not weep,  
 While I can praise my God,  
 Soon sorrow's self shall sleep  
 With me beneath the sod.

He continued to sing, but in so low a voice, that I was not able to understand him. I felt myself attracted towards him. I took a lamp, went over, and entered his dark chamber. Alas ! darker than his chamber was the darkness before his eyes, for *there* at least glimmered the feeble light of the stars. When I looked upon him in the light of the lamp, I was reminded of the words of the blind minstrel : “ Hail, holy light ! ” The venerable old man was sitting on his lowly couch. A few beautiful white curls fell from the crown of his otherwise bald head ; he had uncovered it, and his



hands were folded. I thought of that autumn-eve, on which I saw him near his friend, the only one who was left of all those, with whom he had passed his youth. He was dead now, and the poor blind man was alone. His decayed figure recalled the plaintive words of the songster ;

“ I saw the grave of all my friends,  
And now, alas ! am blind ! ”

Under a painful oppression of feelings, I took his hand, and saluted him ? “ O is it you, reverend sir ? ” Yes, I answered, I felt that I must come and wish you, my blind old friend, a happy termination of the old and commencement of the new year. No one in the whole congregation needs it so much as you. “ O God,” he sighed, “ would this were my last ? ” Well, you were just singing,

“ I will not, must not weep.”

Let us sing it over again. He attempted it, but the song was stifled by his tears. I could no longer restrain myself ; my full heart found relief in a conversation on the happiness of those who suffer ; how they shall be consoled and in the words of the Apostle : “ Rejoicing in hope, and patient in tribulation.” I left him very late.

I now returned to my garden, but I did not hear the old man again. A few times he attempted once more,

“ I will not, must not weep,”

but he could not succeed in articulating it. My ear was struck with a noise that reached me from afar.

It was the mirthful song of a company, which meant to celebrate the new year in feasting. O, to hear the wild noise with which they concluded the year, and on the other hand, the pious and joyful hymn of the old man, whom his tears did not permit to sing farther ! On new year's eve I have never been able to enjoy myself in a noisy company. It is almost too mysterious for a social circle : every one should pass it by himself. A joyful festival can only be celebrated in company with others ; but the evening before the new year is no such festival. Our ancestors remained at home ; they had a truly delicate feeling of its seriousness. But we — thus my thoughts went on — O my God, *we* have lost both in our feeling, and in our lives ; and though fate should punish us with an iron hand, our race will not recover from its errors. Who has not often felt, in our times, as if he were standing alone with his seriousness and enthusiasm for Christianity and eternity, among a multitude of men, who have often so little of either ? Even the better class of individuals among us are not aware of the true misfortune of our time. They speak only of war, oppression and slavery. These evils I also feel, the fate of my people has touched me deeply ; and I understand all their complaints. But at present peace and happiness and the ancient liberty of the people have returned ; yet even now we cannot enjoy happiness, if we do not ground it upon faith. Why have our circumstances, our fortunes, so greatly declined ? Because piety has left the minds of the people. Sometimes indeed, there is a pious family, sitting in secrecy, which

is as a tabernacle of the Lord among men, in which the knees are bent to Jesus. Here and there a venerable old man may be found, who considers himself as a messenger in the place of Christ ; but in general !—O let me be silent upon it ! Happy the time, when there was yet a public sanctuary ! Happy olden time, when the manners were yet pious, and many a house was the temple of the Most High ! Happy ministers, who then had occasion to speak only to the believing, and who needed not to trouble themselves with those at the outer door ! Now the world has pledged itself to mock at ancient manners, and pious habits, and to consider them first as childish, and, at length, to abolish them. Old usages, festivals, and all that has been handed down to us by our fathers disappears ; the dead are buried in silence ; the sacrament is despised ; there are festivals enough, but no holy ones. And yet it might be endured that no external holy institution is respected, if the inward sanctuary, if mental purity and a holy walking with God were cherished more carefully ; then it would be error, but not perdition. But at present ! Let me be silent !

Perhaps I must even defend myself on account of the boldness of this attack. O do not apply to it those terms, so common among us, “a sectarian spirit or professional moaning easily to be accounted for.” Believe in the existence of genuine love for our fellow men, in a conviction of the heart, or at least in the possibility, that the Eternal may be of higher importance to a man, than gain and honor. Call me weak or what you please, but do not sin against that which is most sacred in the human heart.

Such thoughts, even more keenly and bitterly than I am willing to express them here, filled my mind for a long time. But at once the moon appeared from behind the church, through the windows of which she poured her soft radiance. I imagined that I beheld the pulpit by her light. A consoling and elevating view after such contemplations !

“O shine, thou lovely moon, shine through these dear walls, beam upon the pulpit with thy brightest light, for in the pulpit and on the altar, life is always light ! Some explosions were heard. The neighborhood became more noisy. I looked after the people walking down the long street, through which I had taken so many a joyful and blessed walk, in the year which had gone by ; now into the chambers of the dying, now to the saloons of a bridal couple ; now to the baptismal fount, now again into the house of the Lord, and I had almost always been inclined to say : “O ye men and women below ! O that ye were as happy as I ; that ye felt the nearness of the Lord, as I feel it !”

How beautiful is the office of a clergyman. Among many hundred men, there is not a single one, at whose side, at every important period of his life, he has not spoken of the word of the Lord, and of the light of the gospel ! The duties of the clergyman require that he bring every single case under a general rule ; that he refer all the changes of the world to an eternal continuity ; and that he avail himself of everything that is profound and precious in man for the purpose of his sanctification. Thus he meets at one time with the

fulness and distinctness of individual character, and at the other with the acme of all that is general in the various features of existence. He welcomes every new-born citizen in a higher and better sense, than the world ; and the highest felicity to which such an one may afterwards attain, may be regarded as the fulfillment of his pastoral benediction. He blesses every mother, and teaches her how she shall be filled with real and eternal joy. Then a throng of youths and maidens, still crowned with innocence, and standing already on the threshold of more advanced life, enter the church. They kneel down near the altar. They receive the holy influence, and thus they are protected and secured from all evil, and filled with vigor and strength, for everything that is good, by the grace of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And when the happiness and life of man are in their blossom, in the height of the inexpressible feelings of youth, the bridal couple stand before the clergyman, and he confirms the conjugal love and faith, which they plighted to each other in the name of the Trinity, and declares, "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." And now follows a life of trouble and decline, until the servant of the Lord appears near the death-bed, and there prays for strength in death, and for one more ray of divine grace, since evening is setting in. Soon the train passes the parsonage ; the minister himself enters the procession, and pronounces the last word : "man, thou art dust." Alas ! There lies the church-yard. Let the peace of God hover over your tombs ; ye dead !



Farewell ! The voice of the watchman seemed to re-echo in my room. Rejoicings were heard in the dwellings ; the bells were ringing ; the shots were repeated ; music was borne on the air, and a thousand congratulations welcomed the new year. It was twelve o'clock. I started up. The moon shone in my face, "It is come then, I exclaimed, but"—I could say no more ; a powerful feeling prevented me from speaking, and I could only pray in silence !

Presently the sounds of the bells arose from the neighboring valleys, and from the plains ; and the hollow distant peal of the great bell offered a delightful relief to the clear and joyful tones, which resounded from our steeples. Crowds of singers moved along through the city, and the horns were heard according to ancient custom ; the silent night was changed into a noisy day. Some of my acquaintances hailed me from the street ; "a happy new year to you !" and a few of the neighboring house-wives, sent presents to my house, which, according to usage, are prepared on this night by the industrious matrons in honor of the new year. The moon shone with a clear light, and the frost grew more keen and sharp.

O that God may be with you all in this new year, and that these loud rejoicings in the beginning may be a good omen ! Ye faithful friends, ye parents at a distance, receive my salutations. Happy every preacher, if but for once in the year he can move the hearts of the people, and direct them to Him above ! Ye holidays, Easter, Whit-suntide, and Christmas, welcome ! Be to me true holidays, warm and joyful, pious and

blessed ! Ye who are appointed to death ; ye that shall depart during this year ! May God grant my prayer, that at least once more, I may speak to you words of eternal life ! O you, my dear congregation, grace be with you, and the peace of Him, *which is, which was, and which is to come*. Little children, let us love one another. Little children, let us abide in Him ! And your shepherd, my beloved flock, let him be always rejoicing in your love ; may he grow wiser and better — ripening in faith, improving in teaching, in resignation, and in action, — in combating and in conquering ; a true pattern to you ; and that which the earth cannot give him, God will bestow ! O God, much might have been otherwise in the old year. Lord, forgive my sins and trespasses, and receive my thanks for thy thousand benefits. Not I, but thy grace, that was with me. Amen, to the long and blissful year. Amen.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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It was Maundy-Thursday. In general the time of fasting is, for the congregation, the most happy of the year, and the most festive for the clergyman. Sadness and love rise at this time to a higher pitch than during any other of the festivals, and the spiritual life of former days seems to be renewed in the church. Though this may be said of the whole of Easter, it refers particularly to the passion-week. Not unjustly has it received the name of *the* "holy week," of suffering and redeeming love. Every day of the week has its peculiar thoughts, and the nearer the festival approaches, the more serious and solemn are the recollections, which it brings to our minds. On Maundy-Thursday the series of the saddest and most silent of the holidays commences. Even in families, it is customary to celebrate the death-days of the departed, together with the birth-days of the beloved, who are yet living; but certainly in a different manner. Only the nearest relations and most intimate friends participate in them; loud joy has vanished, and both the heart and general custom require silent and solitary mourning. In the limited circle of those who are able to

sympathize in the painful loss, such a day is passed in solemn retirement apart from the world. These holidays appear to offer an analogous case. The worldly also rejoice at the approach of Easter. They rush to every enjoyment, wherever gaiety and pleasure are to be found ; and should the enjoyments be of too high and spiritual a character for them, they secure their share by bringing them down to their own level. But the silent days of grief, the three holidays of mourning ; Maundy-Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter, are celebrated only in the hearts of the pious in humility and silence, but with inexpressible blessings.

On the afternoon of Maundy-Thursday the preparation for the Lord's supper takes place in our congregation ; and in the forenoon, the communicants come to the minister, in order to enter their names, and to engage in private conversation. These mornings have always been most sacred to me. The wonderful ways by which God leads man, and the varying methods in which the religious character is developed, manifest themselves on these occasions with great distinctness. On the one hand, my own spiritual discernment is quickened and enlarged ; and on the other I have the satisfaction to communicate many a word of consolation and admonition. In the parsonage there is a little room furnished for that particular purpose. The table is covered with black, the likeness of the good shepherd is hung on the wall ; mirror and ornaments are wanting, and everything around announces that grave matters are generally discussed there. Early in the morning, I receive here the communicants in my

official dress. This is a praiseworthy usage, which might be called an auricular confession in the sense of the evangelical church. Many of the people are wanting in courage to apply directly to the clergyman in a matter that concerns their spiritual state, and many others need an external ever-returning custom, that their hearts may become communicative. Besides, some members of the congregation feel a strong desire to be advised in a definite manner, before they participate in the Lord's supper. More than a hundred persons generally visit me on this morning ; and although the greater number occupy the hour mostly with general topics, and do not enjoy the happiness of making particular and individual communications in relation to their spiritual state, this is nevertheless the place, where salutary hints are given to the growing youth, and to the ever busy young man ; hints, which are received with love and gratitude, as they are offered in love and humility. The only painful circumstance attending this custom is this. When a notorious sinner is bold enough to enter, then of course it becomes necessary to warn him with seriousness and severity. On the other hand, when in a family, which may be considered Christian in every respect, peace and love have been disturbed, the friendly advice, not to approach the sanctuary at such times, is received in a friendly manner, and bears good fruits in future times. In addition to this, many a profound observation, which seems to emanate from the innermost heart is made there ; many a cheering testimony to the experiences of a higher life is related, and confessions in relation to the



weakness of human nature which excite the deepest compassion. In general it may be said, that there an opportunity is offered for advancement in religious and moral worth ; that there the clergyman is indeed the shepherd of the people in the ancient use of this expression.

This morning a lady came to me, of whom many amiable traits have been related to me. After she had presented me with a nosegay of green and balsamic herbs, as many are wont to do in celebration of Maundy-Thursday, she observed that she should go to-morrow in one sense for the first time to the Lord's supper ; she had never felt before as she now felt. She had hardly been able to wait patiently for the longed-for Thursday. Until now, her Christianity had been only attached to externals, and many pious emotions had past away quickly and fruitlessly. During the first sermons of the fast, she had become aware of her spiritual state. She was compelled to pass through some trying weeks ; but she had contended in silence for herself. On the evening before Palm-Sunday she had found peace in the word of God. She then knew that her Redeemer lived, and was filled with the desire to devote herself wholly to him by availing herself of the holy communion. She related some confirming instances from the history of her heart. I had nothing to say. It is the highest joy, when we can welcome a fellow-being at this point of his spiritual life. I expressed my joyful congratulations, and said to her ; " Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice ! "

A widow also appeared. A short time before she had lost a worthy husband, with whom she had lived very happily. Now again after a long interval she wished to partake of the Lord's supper. She was much depressed, and hardly able to submit to the will of the Lord ; and her freely flowing tears confirmed the longing after death which she expressed. It was my duty to calm her immoderate grief. I expressed my approval of her faithfulness, and her lively remembrance of the deceased ; but I made her aware of her duty to cherish that life, which the Almighty had allotted to her, never to endure it with unwillingness, but always with courage and submission, unto the great day of harvest. She acknowledged the truth of what I said, and I dismissed her with the wish, that the celebration of the death of Jesus, might become to her a celebration of life, the life which his death brought to light in the world.

I was next called to address a sickly man, who now for the last time participated in the blessings, which the Lord's supper affords in the visible church. He felt this himself, but he spoke of his wife, of his uneducated children, and of his large household, with much seriousness, and of that triumph in death, which he could not expect to derive from the disturbed course of his life. I showed him how all earthly pursuits must be subordinate to the will of the Lord, and how every good man ought to desire to depart, and to be with Christ, and how that triumph could only be obtained by faith, founded upon the grace of God in Christ. At a late hour only, and after a long and serious conver-

sation, he acknowledged the true state of his situation, and the *one* thing which he needed. This was a solemn moment. Weeping and yet consoled, he confessed, that he never yet had felt himself so little, and the grace of God so great, and filled with emotions of sadness and of joy, he expressed his wish, that this last communion might become the medium, by which he might be worthily prepared for his dissolution.

I would yet speak of two young people with whom I reviewed the recollection of two blissful confirmations, — of an old man, who said with an uncommon degree of confidence and tranquillity : “It doth not yet appear what we shall be ;” but soon, very soon, I shall know, and of some poor people who felt their communion with Him, who preached “the gospel to the poor.” Various confessions of this nature occur, and we feel compelled to admire the power of the Christian religion, which, though always the same, has a peculiar blessing for each particular case.

It had grown late before the last persons left me. I concluded the series of names with my own, and made a scrutinizing search into my own heart. The minister is in great danger of forgetting his own state, whilst he rejoices and mourns with others, and of being engaged so completely in advising others, that he neglects himself. Into this error we may easily fall. When we assist others in improving, we often imagine, that we improve ourselves. We mingle so entirely with the concerns of others, and we feel an interest so intense in the contest, that we finally identify ourselves with them and imagine that we enjoy a share

in their victory. It is true in certain respects, that by improving others we improve ourselves, as we learn by teaching. But the agency of the minister upon others consists only in words, in advice, and in the communication of doctrines, in short, only in that which is external ; and whilst his whole energy is thus directed, his own spiritual state is more or less neglected. This rock seems to be the most dangerous which the clergyman has to fear. Men, who were numbered among the best, have been wrecked on it. This particular circumstance may perhaps account for the frequent decay of those servants of the Church, who at first entered upon their office with seriousness and enthusiasm, and with all the proofs of an inspired soul.

Our dinner possesses, this day, a peculiar interest, from a venerable custom of our fathers. Whatever is placed on the table, is either seasoned, or adorned, with green herbs. The nosegays of the communicants were placed in the midst of the table, and exhaled a sweet odor. The Christian festivals, although they are strictly spiritual, often harmonize in their outward manifestations with nature, and readily avail themselves of the gifts of every season. There were no flowers to be found yet ; but after a desolate winter we hail the green grass with a degree of joy and interest, with which afterwards the blossoms hardly inspire us. And, indeed, the green herbage is better suited than flowers to the celebration of days so silent. We hardly advance farther in this world, than to Good-Friday and Easter-eve, and hail the green of hope : above only our flowers blossom. In truth these green



gifts belong to the institution of the Lord's supper, since they refer to the green herbs which were eaten together with the Easter-lamb. Thus they unite besides their emblematical meaning, the first celebration of the recently arrived Spring, with the historical reference to the institution of this sacrament, and for these reasons are doubly dear to our imaginations and to our hearts.

For the same reason a green pine forest, in the first days of spring is an object of deep interest ; I felt this and hastened to the beautiful wood, from which I was able to distinguish the church. I sat down in its shadows through which the sun was breaking in several places. The mild zephyrs of spring breathed around me. It was a silent hour of solitary preparation, of humble prayer, and of a peculiar inclination of the heart towards God, which always ought to precede the hour in which we are to speak to the congregation. Thus occupied, I read over the communion psalm of the ancient church, and after I had been walking for some time through the rows of green trees, experiencing blessings from above, and full of happy hopes, the wonted sound of my bell announced the hour of preparation.

I was in the right state of mind for such a service. When I entered the church, the congregation were already assembled, and seemed united in sincere devotion. Hardly a sound was heard in the aisles. The organ was silent. Each one entered slowly, that he might not disturb himself or others. All those who were present, were dressed in black ; and prayer and



devotion spoke in every countenance. The hymn, at first hardly audible, rises slowly; and it seems, as if a holy trembling were heard in every tone. The altar is covered with white. Adults alone have appeared, and they only after a long and serious preparation. The hour has at length come, in which the heart may be suffered to speak. There is no longer a distinction between spiritual and lay-members; they all are standing on the same stage before the sanctuary of conscience, the most holy which characterizes our religion. "*We are all sinners,*" says he, who begins to speak, and in the presence of the shepherd, they all are but sheep of one flock. All earthly distinction has vanished. Riches, rank and education can separate the human family no longer, now wholly united in humility and love.

"With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." This was the text to my sermon. I enlarged upon these touching words, which the Savior uttered on the evening before his death, and showed forth with what feelings the disciples, and with what feelings our Lord, celebrated this sacred Thursday of the Christian church. I then referred to the great and elevated festival of later times, in the first centuries of the church, and described how intensely and warmly the first love of the world had expressed itself, toward the Son of God; how the celebration of the Lord's supper had been the great secret of the faithful; and how all, that devotion, love, separation from unworthy pursuits, and consecration of the better principles of human nature could summon

up, — how all this was made serviceable to the adoration of the Most High. I then approached our own time, its wavering faith and cool love, and concluded the urgent exhortation with the words of the Lord: “Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any one hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me.” It was an awful moment, when the hollow and trembling “yes” sounded through the church; — that affirmation, which answered the question, whether the examination had been strict, whether the state of mind was the right one; — and finally died away in a low and murmuring sound. However joyful and full of longing the heart may be, that “yes” of the confession must be trembling, and fearful. “Happy are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb;” were the true words of God, which in the blessing consecrated our hearts for the morrow. They sung in leaving the church,

With sorrow filled I came to pray  
That he might wash my sins away.  
Now grace and hope I owe to thee,  
O Savior! who hast set me free!

In the stillness of retirement I spent the evening of the festival, and saw the morning of the death-day of the Lord appearing. I prepared for its celebration by reading the gospel of St. John concerning the last hours of the Lord, upon whose bosom he had rested.

How is it, that a heaven, covered with clouds on Good-Friday, appears to make an agreeable impression upon us? The morning-sky glowed with dark ruddy

tints, the twilight lasted for a long time, and through the whole day a dark veil was hanging over the country, which but yesterday unfolded itself so beautifully in the new light of morn. It seems, that we are pleased that the world mourns with us, and that a reflection of the sadness which pervades our heart may be perceived in nature. It seems as if we commemorated in the death of our Savior the death of all our beloved, the destruction of all things earthly. I spoke in my sermon of the peculiarities of the day, as intimated even in its names. It is called "*the good day*:"—for on what day has more love been manifested? It is the still day; for it is the day of death and repentance. It is the day of preparation for Easter, for by the death of the Lord we enter upon the great festival of life. All these feelings are appropriate to the Lord's supper.

We and thousands of his followers are standing to-day before his cross. We remember what he was and what he became to us; we think of his love and faithfulness; our hearts are filled with the mysterious merits, and with the great sacrifice of his death. We participate in the stillness and quiet, which pervade everything that surrounds his body, and we ask involuntarily whether there can be a being, which cannot be impressed with sadness and gratitude by recollections like these? He wandered through the world like a joyous child; he combated everything evil, like a hero; he loved mankind, like one betrothed to them. Now all that the prophets have said is fulfilled, he is lying there and sleeps in peace. The

world could not understand Him. "*The holy one came unto his own, and his own received him not.*" The divine essence belongs to Heaven, and for a time only can appear among us; it must depart again. But in *one* hallowed spot it remaineth; but one sanctuary exists from which it cannot be taken, and where it takes up a lasting abode, even after its departure to regions above; the Redeemer lives in heaven and in the hearts of his own. Every day of communion is a new proof of it. For them he died, for their sins he has atoned, that they might live in righteousness. He has established close and blessed union with the shepherd and bishop of souls, and in this union, there is forgiveness of all sins, love to our brethren, repentance of all our evil deeds, resolutions of right conduct and hope of an eternal life; such are the feelings connected with the death of the Lord, and these are the essence of the Lord's supper.

The congregation then sung the ancient communion-hymn :

"O innocent, Lamb of God."

With an indescribable feeling I stepped before the altar. The whole congregation was standing. A solemn silence pervaded them. I turned myself to the East, where the Lord had sojourned, and from whence this great day and this sacred feast had come to us; and praying, I pronounced the words of consecration. Now the organ began a sacred melody in low and hardly breathing sounds. The congregation joined devoutly with their vocal accompaniment. Then all,



who labored and were heavy laden, all, who were rejoicing in their salvation, approached the sacred feast. The poor and the rich, the old and the young, the cultivated and the uncultivated, all approached, and received the consecrated food and the blessed cup. In many an eye a consoled and elevated spirit shone forth, and an ardent devotion filled many a heart. I shall never forget the expression, with which a soul filled with purity and simplicity looks up to heaven, when approaching the altar to receive the chalice of love. I am almost inclined to say that a clergyman, when distributing the Lord's supper is more than ever enabled to look into the *inmost* hearts of his congregation. In general, the inspiration of the pulpit is by no means of so high and pure a nature as the inspiration at the distribution of the sacrament. The moments devoted to it belong to the most solemn of his calling. The individual disappears, when the congregation and their Lord meet. The ritual of the clergyman is not his own production, but an ancient and sacred form; and when it is pronounced, the voice of the clergyman, while dispensing this most sacred gift, amidst the singing of the congregation, produces both upon hearer and speaker a peculiar impression, which can hardly be described.

After they all had participated in the supper of the Lord, I also received my share. My soul celebrated in silent humility the mystery of that love, which devoted itself in order to free mankind from misery. I felt that for me also, the man of sorrow had suffered death, and from this feeling I derived new strength to



make known to my brethren the doctrine or the cross. A short thanksgiving — prayer followed. Whilst it was pronounced we all felt, how true is that which is written : “Ye are blessed of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” But on a Good-Friday, even thanksgivings are offered in a still and spiritual manner, but although pronounced in few words, are offered with intense feeling.

In the afternoon and on the following day, which very properly is called the still Sabbath, the solemn joy of Good-Friday morn yet filled the heart with pure and blessed emotions, and mingled with the confirmed hope, which had been sealed at the supper of the Lord. Silence is most appropriate to this day of the whole year. The Lord is in the grave, and the thoughts of the grave and the quiet of the grave fill heart and mind. It might be thought that a peculiar service was due to this still Sabbath, but the church has preferred that it should be passed in silence; that it should be celebrated only by the internal feelings and meditations of the faithful. I do not know a text, that is more beautiful, and better suited to this inward celebration than the rich narrative, composed with the most exact knowledge of the female heart: “*And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld his sepulchre and how his body was laid.*” That silent beholding of the grave, that loving, weeping look towards the corpse, and the delicate care that even in death he might be honored by pious minds, when the

world had rejected him, we are able to renew, and who would be unwilling to do it on this holy day, in company with these pious women? To become a glorified body, which has died in the Lord, which now rests from its labor, and which is followed by its works; this is the most ardent prayer, we can offer near the grave of our Lord.

I spent the whole day in deep solitude, it being to me a most holy one. In the evening only I went out, in order to look from a hill upon the arriving strangers, who usually hasten on the evening of Easter to the paternal house, or to the hospitable abode of some dear friends, filled with longing and hope, and wearied by a long journey. This view did not disturb me. The life of man is but a journey to the festival and to the house of our Father, and the still Sabbath reminds us of the weariness and longing which we feel in approaching its end. In the morning this Sabbath-silence ended, when the rising sun announced to our outward senses the great event, when the Easter fires were burning on the mountains around, when all the bells in our neighborhood mingled their sounds, and when the sexton saluted me with the words: "The Lord has arisen," and I answered according to ancient custom: "Yes, truly he has arisen."

## THE CONFIRMATION.

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There is no festival in the church, which excites a greater degree of interest in the hearts of the congregation than the public confirmation of children. Whether this is to be ascribed to the nature of the ceremony, which in this case exerts a peculiar influence, whilst the tendency of other festivals is of a more general nature; or whether we should seek the cause in the youthful enthusiasm, evinced by *their* ardent and elevated love for the Most High, I will not decide. But in point of fact, the most lively and joyful emotions are excited in every one that looks upon the youth and maidens, whose feelings for the time rise and expand in the pure light of the gospel. The beholder is impressed with the conviction, that from henceforward the whole life of each individual among them must be devoted to the cause of the Redeemer. Or is the interest which is felt by most persons on these occasions only a last effort of that good spirit, which wishes to direct the distracted and worldly soul to its proper destination, and to remind it of its own consecration, which long since has been forgotten, and to fill it with penitence and sorrow when looking upon

these children devoted to God ? At no other time is the sensibility of the people excited in such a degree ; and he, who has been able to read their hearts in such moments, has witnessed emotions, of which he hardly believed them capable. Sometimes this solemnity offers the rare spectacle of a number of children of the most opposite classes in life, and varying degrees of cultivation, all united by the same elevated feeling, in the same glorious resolution, and with the first and glowing love of their young hearts striving after the one thing needful. Even in less refined minds, little favored by natural endowments and systematic cultivation, the anticipation of a higher world to come, is often observed in an uncommon degree. Yet could it be otherwise ? When the most sublime and blessed gifts which the human mind can conceive, are held out to an uncorrupted child ; when the instructions of a beloved teacher, who inculcates and speaks of the sacred doctrines with all the warmth of spiritual grace, when the admonitions of their parents, and the testimony of their own hearts point to the same course : could it be possible that under such circumstances their gentle hearts would remain unmoved, unwon ? Neither at the bed-side of sickness, nor indeed, at the Lord's supper, nor on other festival days have I found the effects of Christianity so powerful as at the time of confirmation. When I first contemplated the youthful heart with its pious inspirations, I felt assured that I witnessed the most delightful blossoms which Christianity can call forth in the human character. Extol as much as you please the high degree of mo-

ral strength, which the word of God generates in active man, the touching fortitude which it communicates to suffering woman, its power in the hour of death, and the happiness which it confers upon two loving hearts at the altar : I prefer the mind of the child while yet surrounded by the soft breathings of innocence, whose heart is full of joy in meeting the crucified Redeemer ; and whose mind, yet unruffled by worldly influence, approaches the altar to give itself up to heaven.

It may be easily conceived how sacred this festival is held by the minister himself. He sees them approaching ; their souls filled with the hope of innocence, their faces beaming, and their hearts beating in lively pulses, resolved to live for Him, who was graciously inclined to require their services for such an occasion. Alas ! does not his own experience, and that of others inform him, that it will not be always thus ; that they are standing upon a height, from which they must descend again ; a height, to which many revert their weeping eyes, and regard the recollection, that they have once been so highly exalted, as the greatest happiness of their lives ? Is he not compelled to tell them, that now, indeed, heaven is victorious in their young and pure hearts, but at some future time, the world will grow more powerful, and some may then deem this enthusiasm ridiculous, and these tears childish ? Perhaps they will tear themselves from the heart of the loving minister of the gospel, by whom they were confirmed, — and what is infinitely worse — from the heart of their Savior.



Does the servant of the Lord merit reproach when a bitter sadness mingles with his joy, and he only presses the inexperienced nearer to his heart, as if he were desirous of attaching them so firmly by his paternal love, that they should be unable to tear themselves from him. It is this fear, however, which leads him to the full consciousness of his joy. If he should rejoice that his religious feelings and his views of Christianity had prevailed to such an extent in many human minds, and been so impressively communicated, that they could never be entirely eradicated, certainly it would be but a vain and selfish joy. But that these children may be attached to their spiritual father with all the intense and ingenuous feeling, which is peculiar to youth; that they may look upon him as their leader to salvation, that the love, with which they embrace the Savior of their souls, may endear *him* also, who made Him known to their young minds; and that, in future, they may form amid the larger congregation, a smaller one yet nearer to his heart; — O who can doubt that this more intimate connection of the clergyman and his confirmed children must become a source of rich joy?

Appear once more before my mental sight, my sons and daughters, in your holiday-dresses, which were but the external sign of the blessed state of your souls; appear once more before me in prayer and in pious rapture; full of joyful and sad emotions, as you then stood before me, that from the experience of this day I may preserve some token to bless the future of your life and mine.

For a whole month we had met every day; every hour I saw them advancing more and more, and every step brought them nearer to Christ. We always rejoiced in the approach of the hour of meeting, and enjoyed greater blessings than we had ventured to anticipate. As is often the case in such times of cordial intercourse, external occurrences became the subjects of our pious conversations. Some children had lost their parents, some had met with other accidents; others again expected the arrival of dear relations on the day of celebration; every indisposition and restoration among the children themselves afforded scope for general remarks; each felt interested in the incidents, which occurred to any of our number; and the most endearing attachment united us all. The last meeting approached far too early for our wishes. Many of the applicants had entered a new and happy life, and confessed joyfully they had never imagined, that men could live thus united.

On the Saturday after Easter the children met me for the last time before the day of consecration, and I spoke with them of the celebration of the next day. In the mean time most of them had been with their parents; they had asked them to forgive their faults, and they had pledged their love and obedience for the time to come. I myself had been a witness of such a scene. A well-meaning boy, although somewhat wild and thoughtless, entered the room. I noted his excitement. When he observed me, he hesitated for a moment. The father was sitting with me near the bed of his sick mother. Suddenly he threw himself on

her maternal bosom, and sobbed, encircled by her arms : " O my dearest mother, pray, forgive me all my faults before my confirmation. I have caused you much trouble ; I have often been ungrateful towards you. O, forgive me !" The mother was unable to answer, and only pressed him closer to her bosom. The father stretched his hand towards him, and said : " you wish to say the same to me. Now, my dear son, we forgive everything that you have done, and are inclined to believe that youthful thoughtlessness only was in fault. Go on your path in peace. You have been now more than a year from your paternal home, and among strangers, but remember always my child, that your parents cannot experience greater joy, than when they know that their children walk in the truth." His mother had recovered from her emotions, and as the other children approached, I led them to their brother, and told them what had occurred. A scene like this ought to prepare the inmates of every family for the day of confirmation.

I felt as if I was to be confirmed once more with the children. Could I possibly remain unaffected amid this general state of excitement ? The feeling in a less powerful degree emanates first from the pastor, and then returns from the hearts of the children to his, stronger and more intense.

I awoke sufficiently early to see the sun of this beautiful day rising. It was one of those mild and hopeful days, which may be considered as the messengers of spring ; when the foliage is yet in buds, and the forests have a wintry look ; but the wind blows mildly from

the south, and Spring is announced to everything that lives. Thus was it this morning. Already members had arrived from a distance. The matin-bell announced the festival. I was studying no longer. I gave myself up, in a pensive state of mind, to the contemplation of the festival now so near at hand.

At nine o'clock a few clear peals of the bell called the communicants to preparation. The children were assembled in the school. I went to salute them, and to tender my best wishes for this important day. I then pointed out to them the hymns they were to sing, until I should call for them again. In the church a great many people were assembled, dressed in a festive black, in solemn silence, and with an expression of devotion in their countenances such as you seldom observe at other meetings. The noise of their footsteps alone announced at times an increase of the congregation. From the school the low sounds of the children were heard, as from a great distance. We prayed for them. I commended particularly to the parents the holy institution of the Lord's supper, and reminded them of the morning of our first approach to the altar. There was a good spirit abroad, which we all felt ; and how could it be otherwise on a spot where Christian parents are assembled, in order to prepare themselves for the Lord's supper, which they are to share for the first time with their children ? I left the congregation, which was yet continually augmenting, and went to the school-house. I found the children praying and singing. My children, I said, bless God for the school in which you have spent a great part of your child-



hood, and perhaps its best. You go from the school to the church, i. e. from childhood you are approaching to manhood. They knelt down and prayed. I called upon them to thank God for the happy and delightful days of their youth, which would never return again ; I called upon them at that moment, since the days of their youth were about to close. "Farewell, beloved childhood !" I thought I read on the countenances of the kneeling children, "the Lord be with us," when they left the school-room two and two ; in beautiful procession they now crossed the open plain to the church, which, together with the school-house, occupies the height around which the little village is built. The doors of the church were wide open. Now the congregation looked upon us, now the procession of the weeping children approached the altar through the broad aisle ; when here a father and there a mother, were so affected, that they were compelled to sit down ; when almost from every eye tears were flowing, and the organ sent down its mildest, sweetest, and most touching tones — O who would venture to describe the feelings and emotions, which then occupied the hearts of the children and parents, and teachers and the congregation ?

The children went round the altar and then took their seats in the choir ; after a momentary silence a hymn performed in mutual responses began, which had been prepared for this particular day. At confirmation — a hymn of this character should always be sung. At such festivals the children cannot be considered as one congregation ; but the children should be



placed in a lively contrast with riper years. The choir of boys and girls which answered each other, completed the delightful impression, which we had just received. With feelings deeply excited I stepped into the pulpit. I began to speak of the external peculiarities of this solemnity, and afterwards of its internal worth, how much it supposed a distinct knowledge of the essentials of Christianity and a holy resolution to live piously ; — how it was the vertex of two ages, the highest festival of the soul, and occurring but once in a whole life ; how it spread its effects over that life, and promised protection against all evil, and strength to act right.

What I had prepared and what I intended to say, vanished before the flow of thought which the moment called forth, and which was now rising from my heart. I thought of thee, venerable father, and of the holy morning when thy hand of benediction was laid on me, and thou wast hardly able to say from an overflowing heart more than : “ Children, remain with Jesus.”

After the sermon the following verse was sung :

O Father, from thy throne above  
Hear us exalt this day in love  
Our trembling tongues are vain and weak  
But thou canst give them power to speak !

Before it ended, I stepped to the altar. I looked up to the image of the crucified one over the altar, and I saw the Savior, when with the broken bread and the consecrated cup he also called to the twelve : “ Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto ye are also called and have professed a good pro-

fession." But the eye of the traitor gleamed from among the holy circle. Alas ! thought I, perhaps also here there is one, who is not capable of valuing so much faithfulness, of respecting so much love ! — Just then the hymn was ended, and with hope and fear, I turned to the children. They had risen, and the whole congregation with them. Their names were read. Once more the relations which existed between the children and their parents were adverted to ; once more our thoughts were directed to those who had departed, who now were looking upon us from the realm of spirits ; then the children knelt down and we prayed for grace and assistance. Then I felt as their friend, their teacher and their faithful guide, through the most delightful days of youth. But when they had risen again ; when an expecting silence reigned through the whole church ; when I was now to receive their confession, and place before them good and evil, heaven and hell — it seemed as if all those feelings had given way, and deep seriousness only remained. This moment was to my heart as painful as it was exalting. However, when a "yes" had trembled with sobbings from their lips, then my whole heart melted with joy, love and bliss ; all my feelings turned again to the dear candidates. Before many hundreds of men, before the holy witnesses of the invisible church, they had acknowledged aloud, what for a long time they had received and nourished in their hearts. I extended my arms towards them, and my heart enfolded them in its affections when I said : "Blessed be ye of the Lord." Now the whole file of

girls and boys came to the altar; each one knelt down on the steps, and, according to the ancient custom of the church, by the laying on of the hand, I bid them "receive the Holy Spirit, protection and shelter from evil, strength and power to do good, from the gracious hand of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. I then added a few words, which related in particular to the state of mind and the situation of each individual. To an amiable and active lad I said; "You have lost father and mother. You are the eldest son. Let your course be towards heaven, and you will become a useful man in this world, and will soon be able to support your younger brothers and sisters. The blessings of departed parents may build houses for their children." A blind and pious girl, the subject of many misfortunes, was led forward, and I said: "God withdrew the light of day from your eyes, but he has bestowed a brighter one upon your spirit, which may shine unto eternity. Walk in the light!" —

Can there be a better preparation for the Lord's supper than the confirmation? The ancient communion hymns were sung; and to complete the festival, half the congregation received the Lord's flesh and blood. In such hours we need such an enjoyment. It was a part of the festival, its seal and consummation. The children received it kneeling, and all of us praying.

'This was a solemn morning. Such a morning, O God, give thou to every man, at least once in his life, that no one may die, without having felt at least for

once, what it is to be near thee, to belong to Christ, and to his church !

In the afternoon the serious young men went, alone or accompanied only by a few friends, into the fields and the wood ; but the young maidens, more attached to each other, did not wish to separate. I found them all together in the house of the blind young girl. How great was my joy to see these dear children once more united on that day. I took a seat amidst them, listened to their hymns, rejoiced at some observations, which they made with childlike sincerity, and availed myself of this opportunity to repeat, that a friendship, which had been formed under such circumstances, was impressed for life with a more consecrated character. Experience has proved this often. In the lower classes, connections which deserve the name of friendship are but seldom found ; but whenever they are, they have either been formed in a time of affliction, or have originated in an acquaintance, which had been commenced at the time of confirmation. Faithlessness towards those, with whom they have knelt near the altar, is considered as opprobrious an act as a breach of love towards their nearest relatives. Youth is, with all men, the time of candor and of warm friendship. But that candor and warmth can only last as long as the dew of heaven keeps the heart accessible, and the rays of the spiritual sun warm it. I felt deeply affected at observing how some of the young girls, at this part of our conversation, embraced each other tenderly ; whilst the unfortunate child of the house pressed a friend to her bosom, who



was to leave her home shortly. Whenever I appeared in the congregation, during this afternoon, everywhere the recollection of the morning was again revived. Each day of this nature rewards beyond measure the labor and care, which duty devolves on us ; but the feeling that we have completed the great work is joyful and elevating. No state is more delightful, than that gentle repose of the spirit, which follows high excitement and vigorous exertion.

It might be almost said that the fatigue itself rewards the clergyman for his exertions.

The remembrance of this festival brightened many of the following days. Yet the pleasures of recollection, which were continually called forth by the visits of the parents and children, were broken off on Tuesday evening by the hollow sounds which announced the hour of parting.

A numerous, though smaller meeting, had assembled. For the last time the children were sitting on their old seats, and their festive dress contrasted significantly with the every-day dress of others. The serious hour was commenced with a low singing which the communicants spontaneously began. They were now youths and maidens ; no longer girls and boys ; but always my dear children. With a feeling similar to that which filled me at the death-bed of a dear friend, I stepped into their circle. The hours of instruction had now passed away ; the great solemnity of the confession had been gone through. The intercourse, which delighted us every day, was ended. But once more I desired to see them together ; once more in



our former delightful manner I reviewed our common life, gave to each of them a motto, took leave of every one individually ; and asked them to look upon me always as upon their faithful friend. When they approached, and each of them shook hands with me and sobbing pressed mine strongly, then I could restrain my tears no longer. The time had been so delightful, in which I trained them up as members of the church, that now when I was to dismiss them into the world — into danger ; into an uncertain futurity, much effort was necessary to subdue my feelings, in order to pronounce the blessing at the conclusion. A mild soothing tune ended the service. I left the altar, and bid them a last farewell, amid its tones. None wished to depart. At length the children went away. Several parents came to me. Deeply-touched we looked after the children, and when we stepped out of the church, a warm fruitful spring rain was falling.

## INTRODUCTION TO MY MINISTRY.

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No words can describe the feelings of the young man, when he awakes on the day, upon which he is to enter solemnly upon his "public and sacred functions." Until this time his youthful aspirations had been checked by the limits of his father's house, and the necessary preparation for his calling. Now his previous studies are finished. The people collect near the gates of the great house. He tears himself from father and mother, and gives himself up to those, who shall hereafter be to him as father and mother, brother and sister; to whom he too, is to become equally dear. Sciences, friends, the pursuits of youth, are all removed. The whole human family as one congregation, seem to press around him, and his rising enthusiasm alone can preserve the balance. On such a day, with humility and gratitude, he feels, how gravely important it is, to be willing to live for others, how necessary is divine assistance for the practice of self-denial, and how greatly divine aid is needed to render him victorious amid severe struggles; how much courage and perseverance he will require, and lastly

how much more important it is to be entrusted with the spiritual interests of a congregation, than of a single individual. How firmly does the conviction fasten on his mind that help may be obtained from *Him* alone, in whom we are able to do all things, if He is strong in our weakness ; — this is the sustaining principle which, like a rising sun, enlightens and calms the disturbed mind of the young clergyman. He is filled with solemn sadness, because he is parting with youth and liberty ; with sincere humility and holy awe in view of his high vocation ; and then again, with the strong and elevated hope, which is founded on God : these are the feelings which move his heart, and raise it to thoughts full of light.

Thus I awoke on that day, the remembrance of which I intend to review here.

It was one of those mild May-mornings, when life itself seems to breathe. In the grey of the dawn I had already left my couch. When the sun rose above the mountains, I saluted him with an inexpressible feeling. I may call it a long unspoken prayer. Future and past times, thanksgivings and prayer, flowed forth together. My whole past life with all its joys and sorrows was lying behind me as in a dark abyss, while the future, the congregation and the labors of my vocation spread before my mental sight like fields of paradise. Although trials which had been communicated to me by more aged divines, or which I had had an opportunity to observe in the ministerial life of my father, sometimes recurred to my mind, I felt conscious now, that I was firmly resolved,

and I prayed to God, that he would assist and enable me to act with seriousness, to stand firm with the resolution of manhood, and conquer all lukewarm and despondent feelings, and that He would grant me faith, which, in itself, is sufficient for the victory over a world. For a long time, however, these thoughts could not enter into my soul ; it was wholly filled with joy, strength, hope, resolutions and confidence. Thus occupied with my feelings, I beheld the breaking of the brightest day. My beloved sister came early to me ; she had been weeping, and laid her hand on my arm. Our hearts were too full for utterance. On the branches of the dense linden-tree before our window the first leaves were unfolding ; a nightingale sang in the overshadowing trees, and the rivulet, which rushed forth from the hillside, reflected the first rays of the sun. With fervent love we embraced each other, and felt how nearly we were related. I knew that there was now no feeling in my breast, to which her bosom did not respond. "In parting from you, I feel as if you were to die," said my sister. Our father, entering at that moment, heard these words and said "Not so, my dear children. It is but right to think of death, though we may be actively engaged in the various pursuits of life ; and it is very proper to remind the inexperienced laborer in the vineyard of the Lord, of the weakness of human nature, and of the insufficiency of his purposes, unless assisted by a higher power. My dear son — here his looks and his words were expressive of solemn dignity — you have been educated to the service of the Lord

from the days of your childhood. When you were born to me and I took you in my arms, in the first hours of life, I consecrated you to the work of God, and I renewed that consecration, when you knelt before me, near the altar as a candidate for confirmation. Before the consecration is conferred upon you to-morrow by others, receive it now for the third time in the silence of your father's house, from the heart of a father. No other being can give it to you in this manner. My son, put on the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and pray always. Our vocation affords a high degree of enjoyment, but it has also its trials. Be humble, when Heaven is bountiful to you; and bear with patience the sufferings which may fall to your share; "He who desireth the office of a Bishop, desireth a good work." — "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." Do your duty, first to yourself and then to others. Relate to them what you have experienced yourself of the blessings of Christianity. Read diligently the letters of Paul to Timothy. Let me enjoy in my old age the consolation of having brought up a useful servant of the church, and may the blessing of God —

He could not pronounce the paternal blessing; his emotion prevented him from speaking; but his hand was placed upon my head, and his eyes were raised towards heaven. My mother and my other sisters



entered. We wept in silence and embraced each other.

Shortly afterwards we were told that the people had assembled before the house. The friends of my youth came and visited their departing companion in his room. I felt much distressed. It seems as if we were attached to youth by a thousand new ties, when we are about to leave it. Even now a grateful tear of regret is shed to thy memory ; even now, when thy boundaries have so long been past, thou happy childhood, thou quiet and blessed youth.

I looked upon the dear friends of my youth around me, and we recalled so many days, which could never be obliterated from our memories, that it almost seemed as if all my hopes were engulfed in the sorrows of parting.

Now a long file of horsemen, composed of members of my congregation, appeared to accompany me on my journey. They were joined by a great crowd from the town of my birth. When the people rushed into the house, I felt as if a poignard had pierced my heart ; my mother and my sisters wept near me. How could I be composed in the hour of affliction ? My venerable father alone stood quietly among the strangers and his domestics ; but I could not do so. There was but one means of calming my troubled and rebellious heart. It was that of giving vent to my feelings. I had recourse to that medium, which from my childhood has enabled me to be moderate in joy, consoled in grief, and prudent in the confused state of worldly affairs. Do not condemn me on that account. One may be ben-

effitted by perfect quiet, another by the press of business ; one by the sweets of contemplation, another by constant activity ; one by silence, another in speaking ; each in accordance with the general tone of his habits and character. Whatsoever this may be, it will certainly suit itself to the other peculiarities of every individual. Gratitude towards God is the best means of securing peace of mind — I had found it. I stepped into the door of the house, and spoke from the top of the stair-case to the thronging people. I extended my hand to those near me. They shook it with true old German heartiness, and expressed their wishes for my happiness and welfare. I had been always attached to the people. Even as a child, I had a circle of friends among the citizens who were very fond of me. In the days of my youth, when I came from the University, and after I had delivered my first sermons, this circle had extended, and the separation from these dear people was very painful.

It was a great relief to me, that I had previously given vent to the sorrows of my heart, for now the most mournful and long feared moment arrived. From thee, dear mother, from thy tender loving and pious heart, which from helpless childhood until this day had loved and provided for me with such entire devotion, I was now to separate. It is not to be denied that the feelings of a son at parting differ from those of a daughter — he leaves his mother with a greater degree of firmness and composure ; but when he recollects at such a moment, that his mother must have been aware, that her devotion has never been fully acknowledged,

and never met with an adequate return, and yet — O unfathomable and divine power of maternal love, which cherished more dearly, loved more intensely, and embraced more tenderly that son, whose whole mind was often only engaged with expectations, which his home could not satisfy, — if he now feels all this, then he must be overcome by the most bitter and acute pangs. I cannot describe my feelings, when my mother, in that room, in which we met, encircled me in her arms before the likeness of the Redeemer, only able to express her feelings by weeping eyes and a sobbing voice. In a state of stupefaction I tore myself from her arms, from my father, from my sister, and from the whole house. A mother's blessing. O, it is possible to feel but not to describe.

We then passed on through the streets of the town. When we had reached its outskirts, we gained the height, from which I beheld, for the last time, the lofty spire, and near it the house of my father. Then as the burning tears flowed from my eyes, I felt how dear my "home" had been to me.

We were to make a day's journey and cross the country, on our road, from east to west. At dinner-time, in a beautiful valley, other members of the congregation which was soon to be mine, joined our procession. Everywhere we were passing through parishes in which I had officiated last year, and spent many a joyful hour in composing my first discourses. Everywhere I met with acquaintances, who recalled to my mind past hours of bliss. Even strangers approached me with encouraging kindness. Is not this the acme of outward happiness?

Is it not this, a point in life where the past and the future concentraté, as it were, in the present moment? Is it not here where both manifest themselves in the bright and beautiful light of love? Certainly there are but few men, who may enjoy a moment, so rich and bountiful in love, as that of the minister, when he enters upon his vocation. This love, manifested and expressed in so many different forms, rouses in his heart a warm and intense return, which no one can resist, and which overwhelms even the cold and the distant. O these are precious days, enshrined forever in his heart! Perhaps they are thus beautiful, that the burdens which are laid upon us, may be borne with more fortitude; like the childhood of man, which is full of happiness, that, in later times, the depressed and suffering heart may be consoled by the refreshing retrospect. There is no calling upon which the young man enters under more favorable auspices, than that of the clergyman; for love is brightest in its first blossoms; and in a spiritual life only, we may attain to an exalted degree of this divine essence. It is natural, then, that the minister, when he is about to enter upon his profession, should apply to himself what was once said to Timothy: "This is a true saying, he who desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work." The influence, which the kind conduct of my companions exerted upon me, and the train of thought, into which I had been led by my circumstances, seemed to heighten and to multiply the lively emotions which filled my heart. I had never passed a day so unquiet and tumultuous as this; and yet there is a certain state of mind, in which the highest



degree of confusion cannot annoy us. We feel inclined to take an active share in all that is transpiring : we interest ourselves for everything around us, and yet there is but one subject which really occupies our minds. In my case this one and important subject was the words of the apostle : " He who desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work."

These words, when yet a child, I used to hear from the mouth of my father, when he felt peculiarly happy, and even then they filled me with a foretaste of something more beautiful and exalted. All this I now felt realized in a degree, which I never had anticipated. From this thought the spirit of harmony seemed to emanate, which the variety of incidents of this remarkable day could not interrupt. A great and elevated thought — a powerful and true inspiration, does not suffer us to be disturbed by the most untoward events. To be bent always upon *one* thing, — this is the way to great deeds as well as to the peace of the soul.

Sooner than I had imagined, we approached the boundaries of my dear father-land, of the strong and powerful land, of the beloved and faithful people, in whose veins the blood of the ancient Saxon is yet flowing. There, where the ruins of the "Konigsburg" arise at a distance, where perhaps the last court of the "Vehmgericht" was established, and where passing its boundaries, in a few minutes, land, language and manners all changed.

Near an old and large oak, the members of my congregation stood, who had come on foot to meet me; and at the head of them the more advanced of their



children. The girls offered me a wreath of flowers, and when I dismounted in order to accept it, the children formed a circle around me, and sang a hymn, expressive of their feelings. The words as well as the manner in which they were sung, were simple and childlike, and did not fail to touch my heart.

When I left my native country, and entered a foreign land, the children had received me among them. Might I not consider this as a favorable omen of happy days to come?

We now entered a large and beautiful valley. From the ridge of the hill we could look at its towns and palaces, its churches and gardens. The procession was now put in order. The children were placed at the head of the procession; then the teachers of the congregation and the new pastor amidst them; then the horsemen and the crowd of pedestrians, which increased every moment.

There is yet a love of the church to be found in the hearts of the people. On such occasions it manifests itself with full power, and influences rude minds and coarse manners. I heard addresses, wishes and other expressions which filled me with astonishment from the hearty manner and the good sense, with which they were offered. There is yet a sanctuary of the Lord in the hearts of the people, and an altar of the covenant in the house of the Lord. The servants of the church, who stand near the altar may trust in his love. The excitement of the people may often be transient, their love may often be directed to the unworthy, their rudeness and want of experience may be blamed with

justice, but in most cases the people know best what is needful to them, and are capable at least of valuing spiritual blessings. The love of the people rests on a firm and sure foundation. They are less frequently deceived for they strive after inward treasures, — after faith and love. The hypocrite may impose on them for awhile; but they soon look farther than you are inclined to think; and if he should succeed in preserving his station, it is only by assuming the appearance of piety and virtue. The love of the people is true love. Behold their tears at the grave of their pastor, of him who received their first confession; go to their cottages, when death is near at hand, — and you will feel inclined to love and to respect the people. In the church there are yet some rights left to you, my noble and true hearted people! On all other public occasions it has become your duty to obey others, but here the elective privilege is yours! Blessed be ye, the strength and nerve of the land, and blessed be the hour, when I became fully aware of your worth!

The procession continued to increase, and calls and salutations were given and returned. We now left the valley, and slowly ascending a mountain we came to the boundary-stone of the parish. From it we enjoyed a wide prospect of beautiful scenery; for it is placed on the most elevated height of this hilly country. The spire and the little town rise from the deep valley amidst trees and bushes. Here the whole crowd suddenly stopt. Their heads were uncovered, their voices were hushed, and a solemn silence reigned over the whole multitude. It is customary in this part

of the country, for ministers, when they first enter their parish, to express their gratitude in a short address, as soon as they have reached the boundary-stone. I could enter into the spirit of the custom! Truly, a people who receive their teacher with so much kindness, deserve in return the most intense gratitude.

“God bless you, my dear friends! I have come to the boundaries of the parish, in which I am to officiate for the future. Let my first words be a prayer!—The blessing of God be with us all!—Faith, love, and hope, but love in the highest degree!—We are on the most elevated height; the country around us is extending at our feet; we are nearer heaven!—There the steeple of your church is rising from among the trees. Behold it points towards heaven! May the God of our fathers bless my words that they may also direct you upwards. May my prayers, my love, and my labors be adequate expressions of my gratitude. But even now receive my thanks, for your great and unmerited love. Thanks to you, my children, I long to lead you to the holy friend of children! Thanks to you, old men, —May I be able to reward your love by the side of your death-beds! Ye widows and orphans, ye poor and deserted among the people, thanks to you. —I extend my hand to you with brotherly love; receive it in the same spirit, that we may strengthen each other in faith and in good works!—Ye fathers and elders of the congregation, thanks to you — filled with faith, let us bring forth fruits, which by the help of God, may last forever. Thanks to you all, and above all, thanks to thee, O Shepherd and Bishop of *Thy*

flock that thou hast directed me to this fold. The blue vernal heavens and the loving hearts of these men re-echo the words : "*Receive the Holy Ghost ! which will set you free from all evil, and enable you to do that which is good.*" May the Lord bless my departure from my father-land, and my entrance into your temple, into your houses and into your hearts. Amen !"

## THE CELEBRATION OF SPRING.\*

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I found it impossible to stay any longer at home. The vernal sun threw its rays upon my writing-table. The nightingale sang in the garden. All the splendor of spring, in sounds and colors, floated around me, whilst I was engaged in writing my first sermon for this season. It was Saturday-eve when the heart of a pastor always beats in livelier pulsations, and is filled with hallowed emotions, which rouse in him noble resolutions, and a hope full of immortality. Never before, however, had my feelings been so powerful on a Saturday-eve. Early in the morning I had arisen and commenced my sermon with prayer. A thousand times I had preferred a welcome to the spring, and again returned to my seat to write a word of celebration. Once more I rose from my table, and

\*The celebration of Spring owes its formal existence, in a great degree, to the social relations of Germany; it is by no means a day that has been set apart for this purpose by ecclesiastical authority. It would be wrong, however, to imagine, that the silent institution of these festivals was occasioned solely by the social and communicative spirit of the people. Germany is favored with a climate in which sudden changes are not very frequent; and in general the different seasons announce themselves in a very regular manner. Its inhabitants, therefore, feel more inclined to celebrate their return.



took up the psalms, and many a hymn, which celebrated the spring. From one side of the house I looked out upon the gardens and flourishing trees, and from the other side into the deep meadows and upon the fresh foliage of the woods. Then my dear congregation recurred to my mind, and I hastened back to my sermon. In this manner I had continued until evening. But now it was impossible to remain longer at home. If, at such a time, I have not opportunity of speaking, I feel strongly inclined to walk. I started. My heart was overflowing, my spirit was occupied with God, and my eyes sought everywhere the traces of his greatness. O how every object seemed to welcome me! As I stood on a knoll, which formed the highest elevation in the garden, I could overlook the whole country; the blue mountains in the back-ground, and the little town, between the dwellings of which the blooming cherry-trees were rising; and as I cast my eyes over my immediate neighborhood, the pink and the hawthorn seemed to call to me: "Welcome, brother! Behold, we also are fair and young; take a place in our ranks! We sacrifice to the Father in Heaven; come thou, servant of the word in the temple made by human hands, be now his servant in this greater edifice of God, which nature opens to man. We will listen to thee!" And I repeated with a loud voice my psalms and my celebration-hymns. The people that were passing, looked with astonishment over the fence of evergreen, and I heard them remark: "The minister is studying his sermon for to-morrow."

But I could not remain on thee, lovely height, holy

altar, from which my soul has so often elevated itself to God. Into the distance, into the lower world, I felt myself compelled to descend; and I wished to communicate the sentiment of my happiness to the whole country, and to impart my joyful feelings from the height to the valley. There the forge was heard; shadows covered the walks; the meadows sent forth their delicate odors, and the perfumes of May surrounded me from all sides, like breathings of the East. As at the time of the creation, the Spirit of God moved over the waters, so it seemed to me now floating over the tops of the trees, over the verdure of the meadows, over the whole prospect, and above the little town so beautifully concealed. O! how my heart expanded, when I looked upon the house of God, in which, on this day three years ago, I received the sacred ordination. From the first trembling and fearful feeling of that moment to the high and confident enthusiasm of the present day, the whole course, all the pleasures and sufferings of my ecclesiastical life, passed in review before me, and I was only able to thank and praise Him.

My eye took then the direction of the pine forest. There also I desired to be, to see, on every favored spot how beautiful the new world of spring had grown. I was now in the grove; but almost all the splendor of spring was lost in its obscurity, and I felt with trembling the intimations of a higher world. It was in a peculiar state of mind that, after some time, I left this grove. I thought of the happy hours I had enjoyed in its shades, and of the time when I first imbibed a love

for religion. It was then that a voice from the very depth of my soul inquired whether this happiness and this love would last. A thousand emotions seemed to utter the response. "*Shall they not last? God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him!*" I shall remain a *youth* in spirit and love, although my hair may grow grey.

Engaged in such soliloquies, I went down to the meadows. There the children of my congregation, the delicate lambs of the flock, chased each other, and joyed in their gambols. Here also is a sacrifice, I said to myself, which is brought to the Lord; but the priests are not aware of their dignity. Lovely childhood, thou art indeed the spring of life. Then every desert spot is green, every plant has its blossoms, every day its joys, every season its sport, and tears and joys follow each other with the same facility. O lovely youth, didst thou but know how beautiful thou art!

I ascended to the house of the Lord. Above all others I was desirous of visiting this spot, and of consecrating it for to-morrow, were it only by a look of longings. Yes, if the light of that morrow were now shining, I should be standing there at this moment; and thus I would commence:

"Welcome to the house of the Lord, my friends. My pulses beat more rapidly, my heart is filled with happiness, my lips overflow with gratitude and praise, for I am about to speak of the hour of spring! Before I appeared in your presence, my prayer ascended to God, that I might feel again the glow and pleasure,

the joy and happiness, the blessings and gratitude which I have often felt during those days. O! that they might fill again my favored spirit with the full consciousness of regenerated life; that they might assist me in pouring forth streams of the inspired word, and to find that word, which may also inspire you, and, thrilling through your ears, may enter the deepest recesses of your heart; for behold, '*the winter is past; the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the spring is here.*'

"Thus the songster of the canticles spoke. In the beautiful and passionate Orient his sensitive soul vibrated with divine love, and among the perfumes and tints of the blooming East, his agitated heart poured forth in sacred songs. You feel the voice of youth when you read, '*The voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig-tree putteth forth her figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell.*'

"Now, my friends we also may rejoice. In our native glens we behold the Orient, youth, and spring — for lo! '*the winter is past,*' &c.

"Are there any among you whose hearts are mourning for the sufferings of humanity? O, do not yourselves obstruct the sources of eternal joy! Do not veil your eyes, do not harden your hearts. It is true this world is full of misery, and the heart returns bleeding from the toil of business and the strife of ambition; but cast them off to-day from the poor oppressed breast! Do not suffer them to disturb your joys; drown them in your songs of praise, and let all your grief be changed to gladness; for lo! '*the winter is past,*' &c.



I know not whether I said this aloud whilst I stood under the portico of the church, or whether such were only my thoughts. In the mean time a storm had come up. Lightnings flashed around me; the thunder rolled above; the rain fell slowly by fits in big drops. All the while I had been standing in the portico thinking of to-morrow. When the rain had ceased, I intended to cross the church-yard to my home. In the grove I met old Andrew, who is always seated so devoutly opposite to me in the church, and who applies everything so piously to the practice of his life. His is a Simeon's face, on which is written, 'Lord, thou wilt soon permit thy servant to depart in peace.' As every thing to-day was viewed by me in connection with spring, or as a symbol of its presence, so in this light appeared my meeting with this old man. On his aged and deeply wrinkled face a heavenly spring full of hope was beaming, and his whole soul was expecting a new heaven and a new earth: "How do you find yourself?" I asked; "I long for my home, reverend sir," he replied. "Now, in the spring time?" I inquired. "O yes," was his answer; I have been in the church-yard; again my slumbering friends have called me; hardly can I stay longer from them. Each of the graves had at least one new flower, and this always looks like a new welcome from the departed. The earthly spring does not seem quite suited to my wintry, fleshly garment! I am no longer called for by my mother the earth, but by my Father in Heaven." Ere I departed, he continued speaking in this manner for a long time, on the longing he felt in the spring-time for his home in heaven.



I was now in the still shadowy grave-yard. I should not have thought my celebration of spring complete, if I had not been there. He who does not view the earthly spring as a type of the heavenly one, does not understand either of them. Nowhere can the appearance of spring be more solemn than in our church-yard, where, through the thick poplar-bushes, you have so extensive a view over the country, the roads, and, I might say, upon life; for it is from the grave our most solemn retrospections should be made. On the grave of my pious predecessor the white roses were already budding. A faithful and simple spirit, which even at the grave wished to evince its gratitude, had planted them. On this grave I remained longest. Here the shepherd sleeps in the midst of his faithful flock. The true heart, which purified their joys, which alleviated their distresses, that was so often moved in prayer and intercession, which knew no greater joy than when its children were walking in the truth: not even in death has he abandoned them, but sleeps, in peace near his people. The heart is broken and decayed, but its love yet survives in the souls of the congregation he left behind. Thou faithful shepherd who shinest above like unto the stars, *here* the recollection of thy existence yet warms many a faithful heart,—and among them the heart of thy successor.

The grass was growing over the graves, near which, on former occasions, I had myself stood consecrating the remains of many a friend for the dust! Welcome, ye friendly sods! Be witnesses that life grows from death. Many of those over whose heads you spring,

were dear to me, and they seem to send forth these emblems of hope from their graves as a token of their love and remembrance. I feel myself in a visible, in a sacred communion; I feel that I am approaching an eternal world, where an eternal spring shall bloom. The earthly spring passes by, the summer appears, the flowers ripen into seeds, and not one of them shall remain behind. Autumn appears in its turn, and soon winter and frost; then the forest loses its foliage; no child to be seen in the meadows; the last will fall to the ground, and soon a new spring shall appear. But in some future time, when all the springs of my life have ceased to bloom, when all its flowers have faded here, still I shall find again all the beauties of spring, every dear and youthful form, every hour of inspiration. We enjoy many anticipations in this world, but we are there forever blest with the realities of spring.











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